

MUSIC & DRAMA

# THE MUSIC REVIEW

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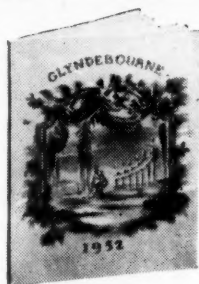
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# THE MUSIC REVIEW

Edited by GEOFFREY SHARP

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## Word-Painting and Suggestion in Byrd

AN ESSAY IN TRIBUTE TO THE LATE EDMUND H. FELLOWES

BY

WILLIAM PALMER

BYRD was one of the foremost English descriptive composers in an age when musical description was coming into its own, and indeed grew to florescence all over Europe. Our late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century vocal music abounds in touches of verbal illustration, though mercifully without the notorious extravagances of the Italians. All manner of phenomena—bird-song, the owl, thunder, war, laughter, rage, and so forth—are imitated as literally as possible in the madrigals, by utilization or invention of suitable contrapuntal figures, or sometimes, as we shall see, by the introduction of apt harmonies. Such is word-painting. We also find a good deal of it in the Church music of the period, although on the whole this tends to be more generally expressive of moods and states of mind, particularly the sentiment of reverence. We may call this suggestive. It is a kind of music that falls between the two stools of Absolute and Programme, in which the composer implies and encourages extra-musical meaning without actually describing it. This is not to set up categories with hard and fast boundaries; a descriptive passage may carry an entirely different mode of suggestion with it; but I do not want to raise the difficult question of sincerity versus impersonality here. If we occasionally have doubts over the rough classification of realistic specimens of the music of this period then, as Shakespeare would have said—"Tis no great matter", once we are aware that the composer is trying to enliven a text.

The practice of both types of realism seems to have been as wholeheartedly and consciously pursued by all composers of the English school as the intricate art of underlaying. In his *Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musicke* Morley showed himself in complete agreement with the teaching of Campion and others when he wrote:

"It followeth to shew you how to dispose your music according to the nature of the words which you are therein to express, as whatsoever matter it be which you have in hand, such a kind of music must you frame to it".

Byrd, too, pointedly announced on the title-page of his 1611 set of *Psalmes, Songs and Sonnets* that they were "framed to the life of the words". He might truthfully have claimed as much for all his earlier vocal works. With two such doctors, pupil and master, thus in agreement, the vogue was firmly set. At every step the approach of such outstanding writers as Weelkes and Wilbye bears witness to the intimate relationship then existing between words and music, a union that has not since been paralleled on nearly so broad a scale.

---

(Note: all the following music illustrations are taken from the Fellowes edition, in which the note-values are halved (except in the Masses), and the music is transposed in accordance with the requirements of modern pitch.)

It is one of Byrd's privileges to stand out against almost any generalization one may be entitled to make about his contemporaries. Thus, although his madrigals are in no way unworthy of him (they are by no means all grave, but as he says himself "some solemne, others joyfull") nevertheless they do not contain anything like so rich a harvest of word-paintings as his Church music. No one now can doubt that his best efforts were made in the service of the two religions between which he had the misfortune to find himself so uneasily poised. But this matter is also explainable in terms of quantity. As against the three madrigalian volumes (containing a number of anthems as well) which appeared in 1588, 1589 and 1611, there are ten volumes of Church music (in the Fellowes edition), in addition to the Masses and the 1575 *Cantiones quae ab Argumento Sacro vocantur* which he published jointly with Tallis. The Latin motets alone—the 1589 and 1591 sets of *Cantiones Sacrae*, for general and penitential use, and the two books of *Gradualia*, published in 1605 and 1607, which are settings of Biblical and liturgical texts proper to the Masses for the major Feasts, over the whole year—number some hundred and sixty pieces, a few owning second and third parts. Besides these Dr. Fellowes collected and sometimes reconstructed twenty-eight manuscript motets. The ranks are swelled further by the thirty-odd English Anthems, most of which are stylistically similar to the Latin works, if rather more uniform in mood. Hence it is not altogether surprising to find that the imposing collection of texts here employed (settings of the same text are very few and far between) covers a far wider range of topics, secular, human and spiritual, than the much fewer and more artificial madrigal verses. Throughout this immense output Byrd lavished the descriptive and imaginative touch. Yet never for a moment does any hint of frivolity mar the splendid dignity of his sacred work, or distract the mind of the worshipper from its essential purpose.

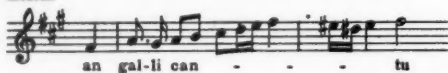
To begin with, a few random instances will show how strongly his creative faculty could respond when an idea touched his imagination. This depiction of an old man which opens the four-part "Senex puerum portabat" (Then Simeon carried the infant), 1605 motet for the Feast of the Purification, is really self-explanatory:

Ex.1



It is taken up in turn by all voices, as nearly all the figures here quoted are. Towards the end of this same motet a long rising and falling phrase is introduced descriptive of the act of worship, to the word "adoravit". The cock-crowing subject in "Vigilate" (1589), would be hard to miss; it is varied and elaborated a good deal, and eventually emerges like this:

Ex.2





In the lighter vein we have a pleasing illustration of sylvan warbling in the gay madrigal "Awake mine eyes", from the 1611 series (Byrd's last publication). Incidentally it also demonstrates his fondness for parallel sixths and thirds:



Again, a soaring hawk striking its prey is vividly presented in "The greedy Hawk", a 1589 madrigal (some of this group are harmonizations of earlier solo songs); and with unique daring Byrd portrays a duel between Life and Death (alto and tenor) in "Victimae Paschali" (1607), sequence "in tempore Paschali", where the two opponents appear to be locked in mortal combat. Conversely, the perfect unity and accord existing between Father and Son is represented by this long passage of thirds in the Creed of the Short Service, made all the more remarkable by the mainly homophonic character of the setting:



In dealing with more particular aspects we notice how Byrd made the most of the capacity of music to illustrate different kinds of motion. For instance in the simple matter of ascent and descent his parts unfailingly do homage to the words. This is especially the case with the Ascensiontide motets, whose texts seem to call urgently for literal treatment; in conformity with Continental custom the triumphant "Alleluia. Ascendit Deus" opens with a forceful rising phrase. Similarly pronounced is the bass climb of twelve notes in "Psallite Domino", one of the short 1607 Ascension motets which are all models in their kind. In the Creed of the Masses (whose date of publication is still unknown) we can perceive something like a *formula* with regard to the words "et resurrexit tertia die secundum scripturas, et ascendit in coelum". Let us take the Mass for Five Voices, and see what happens at this point. The resurrection is symbolized by all parts rising smoothly, three of them by step, not more than a fourth, with the exception of the bass which has to rise a sixth. Gradual descent follows on "secundum scripturas", before the "ascendit" motif, climbing an octave, is introduced by the tenor, and taken up imitatively by all voices. Basically the same procedure is followed in the other two Masses, and as we know, Palestrina did the same kind of thing. At

"descendit de coelis" Byrd always made an abrupt descent followed by a gentler and more wandering one. This lovely flying, floating soprano line is from the four-part Mass; it is of course sung in slightly modified form by the other parts:

**Ex.5**

As far as possible the English Creeds follow suit. In the Services, too, all parts duly "worship and fall down" in the "Venite", and the mighty are promptly deposed from their seats in the "Magnificat", though never so emphatically as by Weelkes, who in his Ninth Service makes all parts drop the forbidden interval of a seventh. Naturally the humble and meek tend to be exalted in high registers, as witness the tenor verse in the Second Service. This extract has been quoted before and will no doubt be quoted again, for not only is it very fine descriptive writing: it also marks a definite step forward in the musical freedom of Canticle settings. The Second Service is believed to be the parent of all Verse Services, elaborate polyphonic organ accompaniment supporting the solo sections. It will be noticed that the voice-part is doubled by one of the inner parts in the accompaniment, as is so often the case:

**Ex.6** VERSE  
TENOR

Morley goes straight to the root of the matter when he instructs his "scollers":

"Moreover, you must have a care that when your music signifieth ascending, high, heaven, and such like, you make your music ascend; and by the contrarie, when your ditty speaketh of descending, lowness, depth, hell, and others such, you must make your music descend. For as it will be thought a great absurdity to talk of heaven and point downward to earth; so it will be counted a great incongruity if a musician upon the words 'he ascended into heaven' should cause his music to descend, or by the contrary upon the descension should cause his music to ascend".

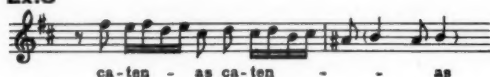


There is little more that need be said on this point. We only need to think of the opening phrases of such motets as "Attolite portas" (1575), "Exsurge Domine" (1591), "Surge illuminare" (1607), or the 1589 three-part composition "From depth of sin" (where Byrd for once really does seem to have his tongue in his cheek), to realize how unswerving was his obedience to this principle.

Among interesting portrayals of less direct types of motion the awesome opening of "Terra tremuit" (1607)—"The earth trembled and was still, when God arose to judgment"—is highly descriptive and unmistakable:

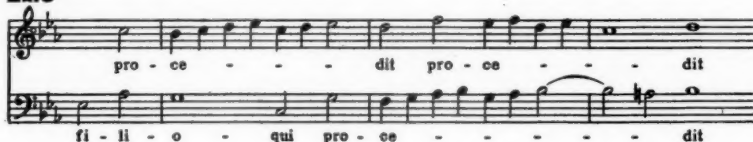
**Ex. 7**

A lighter quivering simulates the shaking of earth's fetters by Saint Peter in the brilliant and massive "Solve iubente Deo", one of the supreme six-part motets written for the Feast of SS. Peter and Paul which round off the 1607 book. Dr. Fellowes has already pointed out that the following phrase is rhythmically identical to Bach's G minor Fugue subject:

**Ex. 8**

It should be remarked of this group of motets, among which "Tu es Petrus" and "Hodie Simon Petrus" are fairly well known because regularly performed in our Cathedrals and larger College Chapels, that they mark the absolute limit of rhythmical and contrapuntal ingenuity attained in England in this style. They are the finest flower of our polyphonic music. The nearest approach to them is to be found again in Byrd, in the monumental Great Service, most of which is unfortunately too long for practical performance. But recordings of some of it are now available.

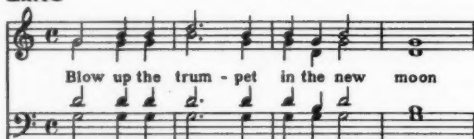
The devices of canon and imitation Byrd several times turned to good account in picturing flight, following and pursuit, as did many madrigal-writers. A less obvious but extremely effective instance occurs in the Creed of the three-part Mass, where while the altos are silent the canon between tenors and basses suggests the Holy Ghost proceeding from the Father and the Son:

**Ex. 9**

Byrd also symbolized speed in the fervently devotional "Speciosus Formosa" (1605), by making the pen of a ready writer pour forth a cascade of notes in a florid run. (Has anyone considered the Italian influence in Byrd?) By contrast delay also finds realization on a few occasions, a good one being a dallying dotted tenor line to the words "ne moreris" in the second part of "Tribulatio proxima est", a 1591 *Cantio Sacra*.

He obviously revelled in the setting of a musical text, and on this account almost lays himself open to the charge of professional propaganda. His exuberant trumpet passages are characterized by the way in which the upper parts jump animatedly about on a major *arpeggio* over a stationary bass. The Ascensiontide motet already mentioned—"Alleluia. Ascendit Deus"—perhaps best exemplifies this technique (though it is not exclusively English). A more extensive example comes in the English anthem "Sing we merrily", whose second part "Blow up the trumpet" begins thus:

Ex.10



and continues in the same vein for two pages. This exceedingly cheerful piece contains imitations of a miniature orchestra, the shawm, tabret, lute and harp each being awarded its individual figure. As we should expect, softer instruments tend to be given smoother lines, like the "cymbala dulcesona" in the festive "Laudibus in Sanctis" (1591).

The bold harmonic illustrations in "Come woeful Orpheus" are familiar to madrigal-singers, and bear comparison with similar experiments in Weelkes' "O Care thou wilt despatch me" or Wilbye's "Of joys and pleasing pains". An unconventional chromatic progression is set to the words "some strange chromatic notes", and equally astonishing are the modulations made in literal obedience to the thought of "sourest sharps and uncouth flats", showing how ably Byrd held his place among the harmonic pioneers of the day:

Ex.11

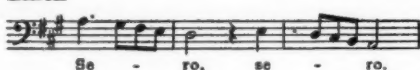


Later in the same piece some highly emotional suspensions and progressions express the line "And I'll thereto compassionate my voice" with great beauty. But this is to lead away from the confines of word-painting into the wider borders of suggestive music.

By his own confession Byrd would appear to have felt a strong sense of vocation as a Church composer, even if not in quite the same degree as Palestrina, who in later life renounced secular composition entirely. Yet there is something of the selfless dedication of Keats to a lofty calling in the prefatory words to the first book of *Gradualia*, a tone of high seriousness and a recognition of the possibility of transcendental artistic inspiration. He says "there is a certain hidden power, as I learnt by experience, in the thoughts underlying the words themselves; so that, as one meditates upon the sacred words and constantly and seriously considers them, the right notes, in some inexplicable manner, suggest themselves quite spontaneously" (trans. Fellowes). A question-begging explanation for composers indeed, and yet one which Mozart, in all his letters, could not substantially improve on. To the less initiated the process seems to be one of arduous intellectual and imaginative discipline, of Byrd surrendering his musical faculties to the sense and overtones radiated by religious texts. Consequently it is for the interpretation of the finer shades and subtleties of devotional feeling that we should ultimately look to him, not for mere counterpoint. Passages of music that may fairly be called aloof and abstract are hardly ever to be found in conjunction with his settings of holy writ; unlike the majority of Restoration and eighteenth-century Church composers Byrd is continually turning the mind of the listener away from the music as such to the contemplation of more eternal issues. This is particularly the case with the Masses, in which an ardent mystical flavour prevails. In general it is when musicians cease to regard or be aware of the necessity for this devotional discipline that the spiritual value of Church music begins to decline, quite apart from what may happen in the way of stylistic development.

Now it is not always easy to lay one's finger on the exact technical devices used by Byrd to create suggestion; to investigate the intellectual background of the mood of a piece is often as vain a quest as inquiring what gives a room an atmosphere. The answer is usually plural—several features. But space will only permit us to draw a few main conclusions here. Suggestion may often be transmitted by the cumulative use of an apparently undemonstrative figure, which when deployed among the various voices prompts a mental picture. An instance is this descending phrase given to the word "sero" in "Vigilate", already noticed in connexion with word-painting. Taken singly it has not much significance: but when introduced imitatively and tossed about among the five parts, most people would agree that it evokes an irresistible impression of nightfall:

**Ex. 12**



In precisely the same way a similar phrase from "Deus venerunt Gentes" (1589) used in quantity conjures up the sound of gushing water; it is set to "tanquam aquam" in a sentence meaning "Then shed they their blood like water". And it is not too far-fetched to see in the fascinating falling "in pace" figure, which concludes the elegiac "Justorum animae"—1605 offertory for the Feast of All Saints—a vision of the blessed souls at rest. The scattering of the proud in the *Magnificat*, an event pictured in some degree by all composers who have set this canticle at any date, is conspicuously well performed in the Great Service, where the repetition by six voices contrapuntally of a dotted angular figure gives an effect of total confusion. In the Second Service some striking cross-rhythms occur at this point, bringing great gusto to elucidate the words.

Sometimes the phonetics of a word will assist in its musical realization, given lively rhythms. The word "fractione" quoted here will almost crackle if the singers pronounce their words well; it comes in one of the 1607 *Gradualia*, "Alleluia. Cognoverunt discipuli", or "The Lord Jesus was made known to the disciples in the breaking of the bread", and is multiplied among the four parts:

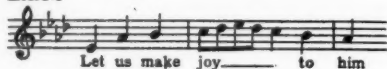
Ex.13



Another occasion on which he took advantage of the onomatopoeic possibilities of a word was with "plaudite" (O clap your hands together all ye people) in a verse of "Viri Galilaei", one of the 1607 *Gradualia*.

In common with all his school Byrd habitually expressed gladness and rejoicing in rapidly moving lines with buoyant contours. Yet a certain subdivision of method is possible here. When he uses short "joy-motifs" he usually rubs them in by repetitions in each part, as when in the glorious Christmas anthem "This day Christ was born" the two sopranos each have the little rising "rejoice" figure three times, and it is sung by the whole choir (of six voices) no less than seventeen times. The same is true of this cheerful phrase from "Come let us rejoice", which is very similar to "Hallelujah canat" in "Laudibus in Sanctis":

Ex.14



On the other hand longer and more highly wrought phrases are rarely repeated in the same form, since Byrd evidently preferred to vary them liberally. Legion instances of such development are to be found. But perhaps the most unrestrained outburst of joy comes in the ebullient chorus to "From Virgin's womb this day did spring"—"A Carowle for Christmas Day" in which the

opening solo section, originally accompanied by viols, is followed by the exultant choral refrain:

"Rejoice, rejoice, with heart and voice,  
In Christ his birth this day rejoice".

This begins in triple time but soon breaks into free and dashing *bravura* runs of this nature:



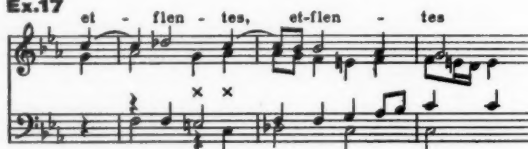
The solo section is then repeated to fresh words (the original poem has four stanzas), and a welcome second hearing of the chorus completes the work. A different method of suggesting happiness is of course by rhythmic variation. This was a byword among madrigalists, but Church composers were not above using it with discretion. In addition to countless syncopations and changes of time-signature, we meet a unique instance in "Make ye joy to God" of dotted triplets, in a long passage in this vein, where the rare formula of two against three is to be found:



Among interesting changes of time in the madrigals one in "This sweet and merry month of May" stands out well: at the words "for pleasure of the joyful time" the music launches into  $\frac{3}{4}$  bars alternated between upper and lower voice groups, and then turns into  $\frac{6}{8}$ , giving an extremely pleasing lilt to the piece. And "Though Amaryllis dance in green" possesses an extraordinary combination of  $\frac{3}{2}$  and  $\frac{6}{4}$  rhythms.

This great master of gladness was if possible an even greater exponent of grief. The wonderfully rich and slow-moving textures of the penitential motets are like nothing else in the whole of music, so deeply and tenderly do they express contrition; each eloquent vocal line builds up a moving series of harmonic progressions. One of the most impressive features is the slow and solemn way in which so many of them open. It would be hard to find an opening more burdened with pathos and heaviness of spirit than that to "Miserere mei", a setting of the penitential Psalm 51. Various poignant harmonic moments carry a sense of acute distress, such as this diminished

seventh followed by the rare augmented fifth used to suggest weeping in the four part "Salve Regina" (1605):

**Ex.17**

Even more surprising is this quotation from "Vide Domine, quoniam tribulor", a manuscript motet, and a piece of chromatic writing matched in adventurousness by very few Tudor works. Here a modulation to F major following directly on a plagal cadence in D flat expresses vexation of soul (original note-values are used for the sake of clarity):

**Ex.18**

False relations arising out of contrapuntal movement are also of fairly frequent occurrence in this kind of writing, often in the same part; more rarely we find the simultaneous use of major and minor thirds, as in the famous incense-laden "Ave verum corpus", 1605 motet for the Feast of Corpus Christi, which has an unusual form by reason of its repeating second section:

**Ex.19**

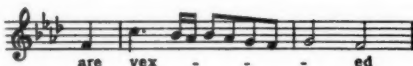
The English verse anthems are admittedly pioneer works, but achieve moments of great beauty. If a fault can be found with them it is that most of the choruses are simply harmonizations of the preceding solo verse, and do not really get us any further. At a much later date the same is true of, say, Greene's "Thou visitest the earth", which, from one point of view, lapses into anti-climax when the chorus merely covers the same ground as the introductory tenor solo. Gibbons used fresh material for his choruses, *i.e.* in "This is the



record of John" and "Almighty God who by Thy Son" (Collect for St. Peter's day), as also did Morley in "Out of the deep"; and their undoubted success in this *genre* may be partly due to continually progressing musical thought. Probably the best of the Byrd verse anthems—"O Lord, rebuke me not"—inclines towards disappointment in this respect, but the exceedingly expressive solo verses and the noble Amen at the conclusion save it from failure. An unusual flourish invigorates the line "Lord heal me, for my bones are vexed", and may be considered a direct ancestor of John the Baptist's denial in "This is the record of John":

**Ex. 20**

Soprano  
or  
Tenor Solo



The final related number in Fellowes' Vol. XI in spite of its original merits is unfortunately here not quite authentic, especially in point of the accompaniment, which has been drastically, and at moments, I think, somewhat improbably arranged from the string parts for organ by the Editor. Nevertheless the original, though less practicable, has also been included in its rightful place, the *Psalmes, Songs, and Sonnets* of 1611 (Vol. XIV).

Even more specifically for use in Holy Week than the mainly penitential verse anthems is the sombre manuscript work "De lamentatione Jeremiae", a series of five continuous movements on the scriptural verses. The harmonic leaning, which is strongly modal, gives place in importance to the troubled lines of finely-spun counterpoint; where Byrd appears to owe most to the great Lamentations of his master Tallis is in the purely decorative settings of the Hebrew letters "Heth", "Teth" and "Iod". Dr. Fellowes has made an inspired reconstruction of the tenor part missing in several sections. A vivid picturing of desolation and despair occurs in "Civitas sancti tui", the second part of "Ne irascaris Domine" (1589), the English version of which—"Bow Thine ear" held its place in the Cathedral repertory throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This time the plight of the Holy City is conveyed chordally by contrasted groups of voices, the progression of G, F, and C major and B minor producing a sense of utter waste and ruin.

Byrd's most dramatic Lenten work—the "Turbarum voces in passione Domini secundum Joannem"—is a group of thirteen miniature settings for three voices of the utterances of the Jewish crowd, intended to be sung in conjunction with the Sarum intonation of the Gospel. These virile vociferations differ altogether in character from Vittoria's remote and ethereal interpretation of the same words, also performed in this country; but in placing his music on a more human level Byrd was showing himself a true son of the Renaissance. The first three sentences are in rigid block harmony, and represent the unanimous refractory attitude of the mob. Then on the cry "Non hunc sed Barabbam" the music breaks into agitated imitation. Next

the derisive shout "Hail, King of the Jews" is set with acute irony, Byrd employing his most ceremonial and elaborate manner:

**Ex. 21**

ALTO  
A - ve, A - ve, Rex Ju - dae

TENOR  
A - ve, A - ve, Rex

BASS  
A - ve, A - ve, Rex

The first exclamation of "Crucify him" has stern and rude vigour, the overlapping rhythms giving height to the emotional pitch:

**Ex. 22**

ALTO  
Cru - ci-fige, cru - ci-fige, cru - ci-fige e - um.

TENOR  
Cru-ci-fige, cru - ci-fige, cru - ci-fige e - um, cru - ci-fige e - um.

BASS  
Cru - ci-fige, cru - ci-fige, cru - ci-fige e - um.

The climax is reached in number ten, when impatient repetitions of "Tolle, tolle"—"Away with him, let him be crucified"—embody all that could be desired in the way of dramatic treatment.

But to dwell for so long on these severer sacred works may unintentionally place a false emphasis on the austere side of their composer's nature. If we can agree with Mr. Howes' judgment that "Byrd was a man extraordinarily like his music" then it is but fair to recall such gay and witty madrigals as "La Virginella" when allowing the music to speak for the man. True, Byrd had a touch of asceticism, if not actually the makings of a martyr, in his nature, as is evidenced by his unswerving loyalty to his religion in the face of professional embarrassment and a certain amount of governmental irritation, though this might have been made much worse. There may have been a stubborn trait in him too, that led him to pursue his interminable law-suits so keenly; and yet it is arguable that this was no more than an honest relish for just litigation. In either case we do best to remember the kindly nature displayed in his delightful prefaces to the "Benigne Reader", his disinterested enthusiasm for the cultivation of music in England, and his self-confessed friendliness to "all that love or learn Musicke". Had not a genial and generous personality been blended with his many excellent musical gifts, his appreciative contemporaries would never have concurred so readily in Morley's decree that he was "never without reverence to be named of the musicians".



# On Haydn's Quartets of Opera 1 and 2

NOTES AND COMMENTS

ON SONDHEIMER'S *Historical and Psychological Study*

BY

H. C. ROBBINS LANDON

THE appearance of the first book<sup>1</sup> in the English language dealing exclusively with the music of Joseph Haydn is a cause for celebration, especially as this deals with one of the most significant fields of Haydn's far-reaching endeavours, the string quartet. The author, Dr. Sondheimer, has earned the gratitude of every Haydn scholar for his penetrating study. The first four chapters, dealing for the most part with *Opera* 1 and 2 (the first twelve quartets), contain much valuable material about these compositions but raise certain important questions regarding chronology and *genre* which require considerable amplitude and/or correction.

Before discussing the problem of chronology it is necessary to establish the contents of the two *Opera*. It will be noticed that I have deliberately avoided placing *Opera* 1-3 together, as is usually done. The reasons for this will, I hope, become clear during the course of the article; it will be seen that, although *Opera* 1 and 2 are inextricably linked together, *Opus* 3 must be treated as a separate unit.

To the twelve quartets of *Opera* 1 and 2 must, of course, be added the Quartet in E flat major ("O"), "discovered" by Marion Scott and published by her (Oxford University Press, 1931). Sufficient information regarding this work is available elsewhere, and it is enough if we recall that it originally took the place of Op. 1/5 in the edition of Hummel. We have, then, thirteen works which come into consideration as the "earliest" quartets by Haydn. Sondheimer<sup>2</sup> regards *Opus* 1 as an entity and places "O" before *Opus* 1. He also treats *Opus* 2 separately. Furthermore, despite overwhelming authentic evidence to the contrary, he includes as quartets three works which must be placed in other categories. The basic error, I think, in Sondheimer's whole reasoning is that he fails<sup>3</sup> to make a differentiation between Haydn's concept of the string quartet, symphony, and a form which I shall call *divertimento* for lack of a better title. The reason for this error, I must hasten to add, is not wholly Sondheimer's, but Haydn's as well; for the composer called each of his string quartets until the 1780s *Divertimento*, or, in the case of the very earliest, *Cassatio*. At the same time he used the term *divertimento* to describe string trios, horn trios, sextets and quintets for winds, pieces for winds and strings, clavier sonatas, pieces for cembalo with two violins and bass, and

<sup>1</sup> Robert Sondheimer. *Haydn, a Historical and Psychological Study based on his Quartets*. (Edition Bernoulli, London.) 1951.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 15/17.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 7/8.

clavier trios (with violin and cello). Obviously we must attempt to place as many of these compositions as possible in separate categories. When we have dispensed with string trios, clavier sonatas, little concerti (Haydn sometimes called them *Concertini*, rather aptly), and the like, a residue will remain—those pieces for winds alone, and compositions for winds and strings, and, if one will, a horn Trio. These are chamber-orchestral compositions which are not symphonies and *not* string quartets, and it is this category of compositions which most easily fits the description *Divertimento*. The fact that Haydn, in his *Entwurf-Katalog*, lumps quartets and *divertimenti* together is no reason for us to do so; indeed, before we can hope to discuss his string quartets we must extract these other works which, mainly through publishers, erroneously became associated with the string quartets.

The first of these is the Symphony in B flat major for 2 oboes, 2 horns and strings, which is found as Op. 1/5 among the quartets. Sondheim<sup>4</sup> says about this work that

"its three-movement form distinguishes it from the other quartets of this *opus*, and for this reason, being considered a symphony, it was thought that it had accidentally strayed into the collection of quartets. This conclusion must be challenged. No. 5 has just as much right to be there as have those works which belong to the class of *divertimenti* [sic]. If, on this account, it is not named among the *divertimenti* in Haydn's *Entwurf-Katalog* (and No. 6 is omitted without any such excuse), the customary classification, valid in Haydn's youth, must be taken into consideration".

Haydn scholars know that Haydn omitted vast numbers of works both from the *Entwurf* as well as the Elssler (1805) catalogues without any excuse to anyone. A few examples, written only a few years later than these quartets, symphonies and *divertimenti*, are (1) the horn Concerto of 1762 (Autograph, Musikfreunde, Vienna); (2) Motet, *Sancta Thekla* (ca. 1761/4), for soprano solo, chorus and strings with organ (parts in Stadtpfarrkirche, Eisenstadt, signed by Haydn on the *violone* part); (3) *Divertimento* for 2 oboes, 2 horns and 2 bassoons (before 1761?) (fragmentary Autograph in Berlin State Library; MSS in Melk (as a string quartet!) and in a Czechoslovakian library; (4) *Cantilena pro Adventu* in E major for alto solo, strings and organ (MS parts in Stadtpfarrkirche, Eisenstadt). The list can be continued through Symphony No. 50, the *notturmi* for the King of Naples (ca. 1790), and literally dozens of *arias* and other vocal compositions. So the fact that the symphony version of 1/5 is not found among the *divertimenti* in *Entwurf* only suggests that it was undoubtedly listed together with other symphonies in the first, missing pages of the catalogue.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, in the collection of Saint Florian in Upper Austria, I was able to find a beautifully preserved manuscript of this work in the version with winds, the first performance of which took place there in November, 1767. This supplements the previous information we had of this version in the Göttweig and Breitkopf catalogues. There is very good reason for the fact that not one single manuscript of this work in the quartet version

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>5</sup> See J. P. Larsen, *Die Haydn Überlieferung*, Copenhagen, 1939, p. 220, especially footnote 18 on that page.

can be found in Saint Florian, Lambach, Göttweig, Kremsmünster, Lilienfeld or Seitenstetten: all Austrian monasteries abounding with MSS of the other quartets of *Opera* 1 and 2. It is equally significant that Quartet "O" can be found in almost all of these—Melk has two old MSS and, as we shall see, Kremsmünster also two, and it is listed in the Lambach and Göttweig catalogues. There is no question that 1/5, with its surer, more symphonic style, was chosen to replace the more old-fashioned "O".

We now have six real quartets comprising *Opus* 1. It might be mentioned that 1/6, although missing in *Entwurf*, is found in an extremely valuable and important MS in the monastery of Kremsmünster, the details of which will be taken up below. Other old MSS of 1/6 in Austria also convince us of its authenticity—I am deliberately remaining within the bounds of external criteria for the moment.

Let us proceed with *Opus* 2. The six quartets in this *opus* reduce themselves immediately to four. Sondheimer<sup>6</sup> says "it is known that wind parts were available for several of Haydn's early quartets . . . horn parts to Op. 2, Nos. 3 and 5 . . ." (italics mine). It might be better said that two of Haydn's *divertimenti* were made available as string quartets; for we have proof from Haydn's *Entwurf-Katalog* that the instrumentation was for 2 horns and strings. On p. 3 of this catalogue, Josef Elssler (father of Johann, Haydn's valet and copyist from about 1788) copied Op. 2/3 as "Cassatio Ex E mol". Haydn corrected *Cassatio* to *Divertimento* and added the words "a Sei Stromenti" as well. In other words Haydn regarded this as a sextet, not a quartet. On p. 4 of the *Entwurf-Katalog* Josef Elssler copied out the theme of Op. 2/5, prefacing the theme with "Divertimento Ex D", to which Haydn added the words underneath "a Sei". Of course, these two sextets are found, with horn parts, in countless MSS (Melk, Kremsmünster, Regensburg, Seitenstetten, Göttweig, Harburg [Oettingen-Wallerstein Collection], etc.); none of these same collections, except for one late (ca. 1785-1790?) MS in Seitenstetten, contains manuscripts of the quartet versions at all. This leaves us with four authentic quartets in Op. 2, and of the first two *Opera*, we now have a total of ten, instead of thirteen works.

Sondheimer has attempted to construe the early quartet entries in *Entwurf* as chronological. This is a very dangerous mistake. *Entwurf* supplies us with invaluable material for establishing chronology, not through its individual entries but because of the different periods during which Haydn or his copyists entered groups of works. If one examines the first pages it will be seen that the original form of the catalogue was probably made by Josef Elssler, who entered various sets of compositions in their respective categories, leaving a blank space at the end of each group to be filled in as required. This is the earliest section of the catalogue; that is, those first entries, which are spread over the first fourteen pages (one must bear in mind that the first part of the catalogue, probably comprising two or four pages, is no longer extant) are made up of all the works which Haydn and Elssler could remember or locate, up to

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

about 1765. But there is little or no attempt to establish a chronological pattern within this first series of entries. If one examines later entries, such as the set of symphonies entered by an unknown copyist on pages 25/26, the casual method becomes very clear: the symphonies listed are (G.A.) 64, 42, 51, 55, 43, 54, 56, 57, 68, 9, 61, 66, 39, 33, in that order. It is important for us to know when this copyist made this block entry; the individual chronology has, of course, to be established by other, safer means.

On the basis of various comparisons with Wagenseil, Sondheimer places<sup>7</sup> *Opus 1* as about 1760. The series of Haydn-Wagenseil similarities which the author has chosen is most enlightening, but his supposition that Wagenseil's . . . "undated works (can be) arranged in chronological order"<sup>8</sup> is open to grave doubt unless one has studied the MSS in Austrian monasteries, particularly Lambach, Kremsmünster and Melk. I question if Haydn's early quartets may be placed in chronological order by comparing them with instrumental works by Wagenseil whose chronological position was in turn established by comparison with Wagenseil operatic music, particularly since Wagenseil used as overtures for some of his operas symphonies which he had composed considerably earlier. An examination of the Lambach MSS will support my contention. Furthermore, Sondheimer places "O" before *Opus 1* by means of an "outward symptom"—the lack of "doubling at the octave by the violins", which, he maintains, was used in Haydn's symphonies for the first time in No. 14 (ca. 1764), second movement, and appeared only rarely in the early quartets and not at all in "O". The fact that this latter work happens not to contain such octave doubling has nothing to do with its chronological position. Haydn did not use this method for the first time in a symphony during (ca.) 1764 (No. 14); but in No. 16, a three-movement work certainly written before No. 14 and probably belonging to his earliest symphonic works. And, finally, the movement in question from Symphony No. 14 happens to be a transcription of a movement from the *Divertimento a Sei* (HV 11) for flute, oboe, two violins, cello and *continuo*, and this *Divertimento*, and the *Divertimento a Cinque* (HV 2) are undoubtedly the earliest instrumental compositions by Haydn preserved to-day, dating from about the middle 'fifties at the latest.

It is my belief that *Opus 1* (including "O" and excluding 1/5) and *Opus 2* (excluding the two sextets with horns) were all written within a few years, and that it is almost impossible to determine any chronological order within the two *Opera* except as noted below. In my opinion, it is even something of a mistake to separate *Opus 1* from *Opus 2*. If any sort of chronological system can be imposed on these early works, I should say—from the stylistic standpoint—that the Symphony 1/5 was written slightly later than the quartets in question and that the two horn sextets, with their primitive scoring and rudimentary fanfare-like treatment of the horns, were composed earlier than their companions of *Opera 1* and 2. Lastly, Op. 2/2 and 2/3 may have been written after the others. Here are the reasons for my contentions:

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

1. In the *Entwurf-Katalog* all the quartets and the two sextets of *Opera 1* and 2, together with "O", were entered by Josef Elssler about 1765 as follows: 1/3; 1/4; 1/2; "O"; Sextet (2/3); 2/4; the two *divertimenti* in C and G (HV 11 and HV 2 respectively) discussed above; Sextet (2/5); three other *divertimenti*, the first and third lost, the second composed 1760; 2/6; followed by four *divertimenti*, the first three lost, the last composed 1760. At this point Elssler's block entry ceases and an entirely new set begins in Haydn's handwriting. Obviously this new entry was made somewhat later, though not much. The works Haydn lists are: *Divertimento a quattro* (2/2); *Divertimento a quattro* (2/3); a *Divertimento a cinque* in G major for winds and strings (HV 1) and a *Divertimento a Sei con 2 Flauti* (HV 8), this latter a lovely piece for flutes and strings of which there is a valuable MS in Melk, entitled "Symphonia". After these thematic entries, Haydn noted a "Feld Parthie Ex A" without theme—the work seems to be lost—and a "Feld Parthie" in C, the theme of which he added later. The next entries, also by Haydn, are still later and do not concern us here. The works comprised in the Haydn block (as opposed to the Elssler block) are certainly more mature and some of them, such as the *Divertimento* with flutes, may even have been composed after his engagement with Prince Esterházy in 1761.

2. I believe that I have located the oldest MS of Haydn's quartets, in the monastery of Kremsmünster. It must be remembered that no early MSS contain *Opus 1* or 2 as entities, and this collection in Kremsmünster therefore assumes a special value. It contains five quartets, copied together in one handwriting with a title page, listing all the individual movements of each quartet and noting at the bottom "Prof. Crems. Münster 1762". This is the earliest dating I have ever seen of the quartets; it invalidates the "traditional" date of 1763 assigned to Op. 1 by the editor of the Eulenburg miniature scores. The interesting thing is that this MS includes Op. 2/6; 1/2; 1/1; 1/3 and 1/6 in that order, thus linking 2/6 to Op. 1 and providing a strong case for the authenticity of 1/6—not that anyone has ever doubted that Haydn wrote it, despite its absence from *Entwurf*. Kremsmünster also possesses MSS of "O" (2 copies), Op. 1/3 and 1/4 (2 copies).

3. The next stage of affairs is the Lambach catalogue, an extremely valuable document in the Benedictine monastery of Lambach in Upper Austria. The catalogue was prepared in 1768 and is a massive document, listing countless symphonies by Leopold Mozart, Michael Haydn (who slept there several times and occasionally played the organ in the Mass), Wagenseil, Monn, and so on. The Haydn entries are most revealing. They consist of very early works, the latest listed there being Symphony No. 14. Symphonies Nos. 28 (1765) and 46 (1772), which I found in old MSS there, are not listed in the catalogue; so we may assume that Symphony No. 14 (ca. 1764) was the last piece of Haydn to get into the catalogue. The works given are: Symphony 1; Symphony in B flat (HV 7, an authentic symphony for some reason omitted from the 104); Quartet 2/4; Symphony 2 (with two oboe parts!); Symphony 19; Symphony 14; Symphony 18 (1760–63?); string Trio HV 21; string Trio in F (Larsen, *Drei Haydn Kataloge* Appendix, F-3); Quartet 1/3; 1/1; Quartet in



D major (Larsen, *ibid.*, D-1); Quartet 1/6; 2/2; "O"; 1/2; a *Cassatio* in D for horns and strings (Larsen, *ibid.*, [*Divertimento*] D-7); string Trio HV 8; string Trio in E flat (not in Larsen and apparently quite unknown) and finally Symphony 37, a work assigned far too high a number in the 104, and which belongs to the very earliest Haydn symphonies (before 1761?). The order of the above list follows that of the catalogue. Please note that 1/5 (the Symphony) and the two horn sextets (2/3 and 2/5) are missing, that "O" and 1/6 are included.

As far as we can determine, the quartets of this earliest period were placed together in sets of six by the French publishers. As we know, "O" was later removed, 1/5 took its place and the two horn sextets were arranged (almost certainly not by Haydn!) as quartets and added to four other works to form *Opus* 2. At various times an F major work made its appearance in either *Opus* 1 or *Opus* 2. Sondheimer correctly mentions that it was listed in the Breitkopf catalogue along with other early quartets. It was printed by Chevardière in their Op. 3, which consisted of the six quartets of Op. 2 with this F major work instead of 2/6. Chevardière also printed the horn parts that belong to this work; for, as might be surmised, the piece in question is not a quartet but a *divertimento* for 2 horns, 2 violins (or, as Chevardière has it violin, viola) and bass. In a manuscript in the National Library in Vienna, we have what might be termed the next-to-last stage of affairs (the last being the order of Op. 1/3 as we know it to-day). In this manuscript all the quartets of Op. 1 to 3 are bound together, with "O" instead of 1/5, with this F major *Divertimento* (without the horn parts) and with the two horn sextets (also without the horns). It is, to my knowledge, the only manuscript of Op. 3 extant. This is not the place to enter into the weird situation of Op. 3, of which there are practically no sources except printed editions, and which is surrounded by suspicious circumstances. The MS in the National Library here [Vienna] is the only manuscript document relating *Opera* 1, 2 and 3 with each other. A great deal more research will have to be done before the mystery of the Op. 3 quartets can be explained satisfactorily.

# Why is Schönberg's music so hard to understand?

BY

ALBAN BERG

TRANSLATED BY ANTON SWAROWSKY AND JOSEPH H. LEDERER

IN answering this question one might be inclined to ferret out the ideas behind Schönberg's music, to examine the music in terms of intellectual content: to do, in other words, what is done so frequently: approach music with philosophic, literary, and other considerations. This is not my intention! I am concerned only with what takes place musically in Schönberg's work, with the compositional means of expression. This, like the specific language of any work of art (one presupposes its acceptance as such) is the only meaningful one. Generally speaking, to understand this language in its entirety and details means recognizing the entrance, duration, and end of all melodies, hearing the simultaneous sounding (*Zusammenklang*) of the voices not as

Ex. 1    *Nicht zu rasch*  
(Not too fast)

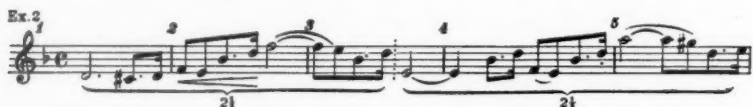
I. VI.  
II. VI.  
Vcl.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 etc.

random occurrences, but as harmonies, and experiencing the small and large concatenations and contrasts as such. It means following a piece of music as a person with full command of the language follows the wording of a piece of poetry. For one who is able to think musically, this is equivalent to understanding the work itself. Therefore, the question at the head of our investigation seems already answered if we can only succeed in examining Schönberg's musical ways of expression for their intelligibility, and in determining the extent of their lucidity.

Knowing how much can be accomplished through detailed examination, I want to do this on the basis of a single example chosen at random, there being few passages in Schönberg's music which would not serve equally well.

It may be that today, ten years after their composition, the ten measures of Ex. 1 (the first of the D minor Quartet) are not considered unintelligible or even difficult. Still, one who wishes to recognize only the main voice and follow it, on first hearing, to the end of these ten measures will encounter difficulties as early as the third bar, especially if he would like to experience the main voice as a single melody, which, since it is precisely that, should be as singable as the beginning of one of Beethoven's quartets. Accustomed to a melodic structure the main feature of which is the symmetry of its periods, and a thematic structure limited to even numbered measure groups (rules governing all music of the last 150 years with few exceptions), an ear so restrictively pre-conditioned begins to doubt the correctness of the first bars of the melody, which, contrary to expectations, consists of two and a half bar phrases.



Avoidance of thematic structure built on two or four measures is, after all, nothing new. On the contrary, Bussler<sup>1</sup> says quite correctly that "the greatest masters of form (he means Mozart and Beethoven) cherish free and bold constructions and rebel against being squeezed into the confines of even numbered measure groups". But how seldom does one find such a thing in the classics or among classical composers (with the possible exception of Schubert). And how is it that this faculty, so natural to the eighteenth century and before, got lost in the period of romantic music (Brahms' folk melodies excepted), the music of Wagner, and the whole New German school that ensued! Even the theme of Strauss' *Heldenleben*, which once seemed so audacious, is conspicuous for being built entirely on two to four bar phrases leading to a repetition of the first after the usual sixteen measures. In the music of Mahler and—to mention a master of a completely different style—Debussy, we find melodic structures with even numbers of bars almost exclusively. And when Reger (the only post-romantic exception besides Schönberg) prefers rather free constructions, reminiscent of prose, as he

<sup>1</sup> Ludwig Bussler, 1839-1900, German writer and theoretician.



himself says,<sup>2</sup> then this is the reason for the relative formidability of his music. I would go so far as to say the only reason—since none of its other qualities: the motivic development of the multi-toned phrases, the harmonic structure, certainly not the contrapuntal mode of writing, would render his musical language incomprehensible.

Understandably, when free and asymmetrical construction of themes is considered to be just as natural as the two, four, and eight bar kind—and that is perhaps the most important element in Schönberg's way of writing—such music is likely to be followed with difficulty or, as in his later works, not at all.

During its rapid growth and surging restlessness, the theme, in our example, utilizes the right of variation in the second repetition of this rhythmically almost incomprehensible phrase. If, then, such a theme should receive the following shortened form



the listener loses the thread before the first melodic climax is reached two measures later:



the sixteenth note motive of this climax may strike the listener as having dropped out of thin air, though, again, it is only the natural continuation of the principal theme secured also through variation. Indeed, just this succession of chromatic jumps of a seventh, as may be observed even today at performances of the Quartet, presents an insuperable obstacle for one who is used to a gradual unfolding of the theme, or possibly only one development, through sequences and unvaried repetitions. Moreover, the listener is generally unable to fit the motive of the sixteenth note figures into a harmonic scheme. It is present, of course; but the notes speed by too quickly. Thus he loses the last means of orientation to appreciate this portion for its cadential value, let alone experience it as a *caesura* or climax. He hears it rather as an arbitrary grouping of "cacophonies" produced by the zigzag of the first violin part, which seems senseless to him. Of course he loses the continuity and with it, the new, though connected theme constructions which contain the richest motivic detail, and lead, nineteen measures later, to a repetition of the principal theme in E flat.

How much easier for the listener if the beginning of the Quartet—forgive my irreverence—were to take the following form, deliberately avoiding the rich rhythmic construction, motivic variation, and thematic detail, and retaining only the number of measures and the organic melodic invention.

<sup>2</sup> An expression used by Schönberg, independently of Reger, to refer to the language of his own music.



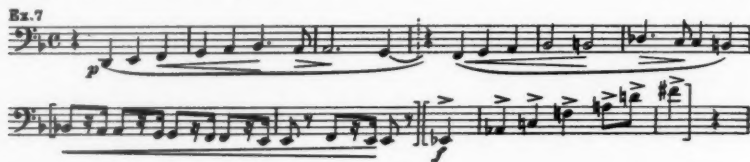
Here the asymmetry of the original is actually made to disappear, being replaced by a two bar construction capable of pleasing even the most obdurate listener. The motivic and rhythmic growth unfolds slowly, eschewing every possibility of variation; an *alla breve* of sixteenth notes, over which a listener might stumble, is completely avoided, and with it, the final obstacle: the difficulty of hearing as melody these chromatic jumps of a seventh, accomplished by continuing harmonization on the half bar and by not speeding up beyond the value of an eighth note. Should a theme, so mutilated, still stand in danger of not being understood, then an exact repetition in the principal key entering immediately after the first statement is finished will guarantee a general understandability, verging on popularity.

How different with Schönberg! "To penetrate into the psychology of his creative process, the sketchbooks, used exclusively in the epoch of this Quartet, are of supreme importance. No one who has skimmed through them could brand his music as contrived, cerebral, or any of the other catch-words used by those who want to protect themselves from Schönberg's over-rich imagination". Also, "each thematic idea is invented along with its countersubject".<sup>3</sup>

And all this needs to be heard! One might receive a general impression of the beginning of the Quartet, and still miss the persuasive melody of the middle voice. This voice, an exception, is built on one or two bar phrases, set contrapuntally against the first five measure groups of the violin theme.



If the listener misses the expressive singing of the bass part, likely because of its dissolution into two—now three bar phrases, then he cannot grasp correctly even the principal theme.



<sup>3</sup> Arnold Schönberg by Egon Wellesz.

One who does not react spontaneously to the beauty of such themes (and this type of music in general) requires at least the ability to keep separate such characteristically distinct voices. He must also be able to recognize melodic segments of varied lengths, continually beginning and ending anew at different points in these first six bars. This means following their various paths, in addition to coming sympathetically to rest when they sound simultaneously, as well as coping with Schönberg's infinitely varied and differentiated rhythms—all of which constitutes a formidable task.

In the face of the aforementioned, consider the above quoted cello part in which a hopping, syncopated eighth note scale develops out of the long drawn *legato* phrases<sup>4</sup> as early as in the seventh measure. Two bars later a seven-tone theme of weighty quarter notes, rushing upward, alternately in fourths and thirds (E flat, A flat, C, F) is added in contrast, thus revealing two integral motivic parts of the Quartet. Observe how these rhythmic figures are made to relate contrapuntally to the other parts, whose note value-relations develop along entirely different lines.

When music contains rhythms in such abundance and in so concentrated a form, vertically as well as horizontally, one really has to be completely deaf or malicious to call it "arhythmical"! Of course if this word is made to mean all note and metric combinations not directly derivable from mechanical movement (*e.g.* millwheel and railway) or body movement (march, dance, *etc.*) I cannot object to its application to Schönberg's music. But then I must insist on the same treatment for the music of Mozart and the other classical masters, where they have not sought to produce regular, and hence easily understandable rhythms (as in scherzo and rondo movements, or others borrowed from the old dance forms).

Or is it possible that this word "arhythmical" is not really a musical term at all, but—like "ethos", "cosmos", "dynamics", "mentality" and other catchwords of our time—a word which applies where there is any motion at all, whether it be in art or sport, philosophy or industry, world history or finance! Such a term, stemming as it does from other than the motion of music, is not exclusively definable in the context of music. Rather, it is vague, permitting one to talk of the rhythm of music in the same tone of voice one might use to mention a drop in the stock market. Such looseness of nomenclature is out of the question for anyone who can discern the rhythmic occurrences in a piece of music, where they originate from musical detail and expand over the whole work. Unfortunately, the blame for this adulteration of terms lies where, for professional reasons, we might least expect it: that is, with a good many composers themselves. This only proves how hard it is to understand a music which demands critical judgment in terms of its own art—not some extraneous "point of view".

Thus we return to the domain of our investigation: why it is so hard to understand Schönberg's music. As we have seen, its riches—the thematic,

<sup>4</sup> If the sixth measure is recognized as a variation of the third, and the seventh as nothing else but a variation of the preceding one, then the feeling of musical coherence (without which music would be meaningless) is immediately achieved.

contrapuntal, and rhythmic beauties—have created these very difficulties. There remains only to discuss the harmonic richness, the unending supply of chords and chord combinations, which, after all, are nothing but the result of a polyphony quite unique in contemporary music: a juxtaposition of voices, the melodic lines of which possess a flexibility heretofore unknown. Their superabundance of harmony was, therefore, just as misunderstood as everything else, and with as little justification.



This strict chorale-like four part writing is by no means the nucleus of an *adagio*, extending in a wide sweep, as one might easily imagine. It is the harmonic skeleton of the beginning of this much discussed Quartet.

Incredible that anything so simple could ever have missed being understood, that, moreover, audiences, in search of sensation, regarded it as an orgy of dissonances. With striking logic, various and sundry chords are here assembled in the confines of ten rapidly moving *alla breve* bars. This alone can explain why a listener accustomed to the poverty of harmonic degrees in other contemporary composers, is not equal to the task of comprehending fifty or more chords in a few seconds. He therefore charges "decadence" (another deadly *cliché*) where only wealth and abundance reign. The structure of the chords and their different combinations cannot be the reason why this music is so hard to understand. The last example was meant to demonstrate this. Not even in the least accented sixteenth note of these ten measures can one find a harmonic sound that might give pause to an ear conditioned by the harmonic conventions of the last century. Nor will the two whole tone chords at \*, with their harmonic preparation and resolution, be the cause of moral indignation in anyone who prefers not to appear ridiculous in the eyes of the whole musical world.

One can see from this how inappropriate it is, and always was, to say that "modern" voice leading lacked consideration for the resulting vertical sounds,

since everything I have shown in these ten bars could be proven for any part of this work. Even the boldest harmonic developments are far from a confluence of accidental sounds. Neither here nor anywhere else does anything happen by accident. Anyone who, in spite of all this, cannot follow the music should consider it his own fault and, without embarrassment, trust the ear of a master who conceives all these seemingly difficult matters as easily as he dashes off the most complicated counterpoint exercises for his students, and who, when asked if a particularly difficult passage of his had ever been realized, replied jocularly and profoundly, "Yes, when I composed it".

A mode of composing that results from such unerring musicianship embraces all compositional possibilities and is, therefore, never totally comprehensible. This analysis, complete though I have tried to make it, has by no means exhausted the possibilities of these few measures. One could say, for instance, that the voices, initially invented in double counterpoint—thus polyphonic in this respect also—permit a many-sidedness, which, of course, appears in the various recapitulations of the principal theme. Even in this early work of Schönberg he lets the violin and cello change places, avoiding all mechanical repetitions. Illustrating it graphically, what stands (in the first measures of the Quartet) in vertical order

|   |                |
|---|----------------|
| 1                                       | 3 (in octaves) |
| 2 is now brought into the sequence of 2 |                |
| 3                                       | 1              |

At the third appearance (p. 8) the secondary voices, while retaining the same melodic tones, are radically varied. The sequence is then

|   |
|---|
| 2 (variant in sixteenths)               |
| 1 (in octaves)                          |
| 3 (embellished by eighth note triplets) |

Finally, the principal and secondary parts—not to mention their combinations with other themes—appear in the last exposition of the last principal section (p. 53) in the sequence of

|   |
|---|
| 3 (variant in eighth note triplets, but different from the preceding one) |
| 1 (in octaves)  |
| 3 (inversion in eighths with diminution).                                 |

But these opening ten measures and their varied repetitions constitute a very small fraction of this work which lasts nearly an hour, and can only give an idea of the profusion of polyphonic and harmonic detail released in thousands of measures and unknown since Bach. It may be said without exaggeration that the minutest part—each accompanying figure—is important for the development and changing rhythm of these four voices, that it is, in other words, thematic. And all this in one big symphonic movement, the colossal architecture of which we cannot even begin to discuss in the framework of this article. It is hardly surprising that with such things going on, an ear accustomed to the music of the last century cannot take it all in. The music of that period is homophonic almost throughout: the themes are built on two



or four measure phrases, the growth and development of which would be unthinkable without sequences, copious repetitions—mostly of the mechanical type—and the relative simplicity of harmonic and rhythmic events thereby conditioned. Imbued with such things for decades, the listener of today is incapable of understanding music of a different kind. Deviation from even one of these familiar musical features—though the rules may well permit it—is irritating to him. How much more so when, as in Schönberg's music, there exists a simultaneous combination of all these qualities, usually regarded as attributes of good music, but generally found isolated and diffused throughout various epochs.

Think of the polyphony of Bach, of the theme structure of the classics and their antecedents, often quite free in rhythm and construction, exhibiting a mastery of the variation form; of the Romantics with their juxtaposition of keys, only distantly related, bold, even today; of Wagner's new chord structures, achieved through chromatic alteration and enharmonic change, and his effortless way of incorporating them into the tonality; finally of Brahms' thematic and motivic work, often encompassing the finest detail of art. Obviously, music that combines all the possibilities handed down to it by the classics must differ from a contemporary music, which—as I will show—is not a synthesis of this kind. It is in spite of these qualities, recognizable as attributes of every good music, and in spite of the richness with which they are employed in all musical fields—or actually because of them—that Schönberg's music seems as recondite as it does.

I shall be reproached for having proved something that did not need proving: the difficulty of the D minor Quartet, a tonal piece which long ago ceased to be a problem and has even been generally accepted and understood! This may be somewhat exaggerated, and I admit that the question at the head of this article would appear answered only if everything here, based on a few measures in the minor mode, had been shown on the basis of at least one example of the so-called "atonal" music. But, after all, this article does not deal exclusively with the question of difficulty, but also with the proof that every event in this music is completely above-board and fashioned only along the lines of highest art. Of course this was easier to show using an example still based on major and minor tonality. But it is nonetheless appropriate for our study, since in earlier times it prompted as much agitation as his "atonal" music today. Now, however, when I view them both as accomplished facts—which they surely are—I need only apply everything I have said about these ten measures to any passage of his later or very latest works. This is possible not only because of the creativeness of Schönberg, the "father of atonal thought", as he is generally called, but also because of the music's acceptance by a large part of the musical world. This would appear to have solved the riddle of our title and established that both kinds of music encompass the same high standards of art—and therefore employ legitimate means of expression. Thus it will be clear that the music's abstruseness lies not so much in its so-called "atonality", which by now is the means of expression for so many contemporaries, but in that structure of

Schönberg's earlier music, the inexhaustible artistic techniques—applied also in this later harmonic style—the use of all compositional possibilities of the music of centuries: in short, its boundless opulence. Here we find the same variety of harmonic treatment, with various degrees of cadence; also melodies suitable to such harmonic treatment, making boldest use of the possibilities of the twelve tones; the unsymmetrical, free thematic construction of themes, with its motivic work never ebbing; the art of variation, projecting itself thematically as well as in the harmonization, contrapuntally as well as in the rhythm; also the polyphony that expands over the whole work and the unequalled technique of contrapuntal part-writing; and finally the variety of rhythms, subject both to their own laws and those of variation, so that in this respect also, Schönberg aims at an art of construction entirely remote from the “dissolved rhythm” so foolishly attributed to him.

Viewed from such a universal standpoint, how different in every respect is the position of other contemporary composers, even if in their harmonic language they have broken with the predominance of the triad. In their music, too, we can find the artistic techniques just enumerated, but never—as with Schönberg—combined in the work of a single personality. Rather, they are always distributed among various groups, schools, years, nations and their respective representatives. One type likes the polyphonic way of writing which reduces thematic development and the art of variation to a bare minimum. The other prefers bold harmonic structure which does not shrink from any chord, though its melodic construction scarcely goes beyond homophony and may even be characterized by the use of only two and four measure phrases. The “atonality” of the one consists in putting wrong basses to primitively harmonized periods; others simultaneously provide two or more (respectively major and minor) keys, whereby the other musical features of each attest to a frightful poverty of invention. A music characterized by frequently changing melody and free thematic constructions suffers from an inertia of harmony, as shown by its dearth of harmonic degrees, sustained chords, endless pedal points and continually recurring chord clusters. I would almost go so far as to assert that a music so constructed cannot exist without mechanical repetitions and the most primitive sequences. This is shown especially in the rhythm, which reaches the very limit of monotony, often only simulating a richness of form, through changing time signatures and rhythmic displacement, where everything else is poverty. More often than one would think, this rhythm—sometimes rigid, sometimes hammering, sometimes dancelike and similarly animated—is the only thing keeping such otherwise unsubstantial music from falling apart. The practitioners of this technique of composition are the ones sure to be called “strong rhythmic talents”.

The orientation toward these more or less rigid principles, often degenerating into one-sidedness—this satisfaction with being (as the beautiful saying goes) “modern, but not extreme”—helps such “atonal” or “progressively orientated” music to be understood and moderately liked. After all, it may confront the listener with one or more difficult problems, but in all other respects it does not deviate from the usual, often not even from the deliberately primitive.

Thanks to these negative qualities it can also please the ears of the musically less gifted: in other words, it makes "easy listening". Even more so, since composers of such music can conform to style by being aware only of their special brand of modernity, without also accepting responsibility for a combination of all these possibilities. That inescapable necessity of accepting even the most extended consequences of musical universality is found only once: namely in the music of Schönberg. Having said this I believe the last and perhaps strongest reason for its abstruseness has been stated. However, the fact that this noble compulsion is being fulfilled with a sovereignty bestowed, I would say, only upon a genius, allows for the assumption, or, rather, the assertion, that when the "classics of our time" belong to the past, Schönberg will be among the very few remembered as a classic for all time. For not only has he, as Adolf Weissmann so aptly says, "drawn the last bold conclusions from musical culture",<sup>5</sup> but he has also progressed further than those who, lacking definite direction, looked for new paths, and—consciously or unconsciously—negated the art of this musical culture. Thus, without being a prophet one can say even today on Schönberg's fiftieth birthday that the work he has already given the world seems to have secured not only the pre-eminence of his personal art, but, more important, that of German music for the next fifty years.

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From the special issue of the *Musikblätter des Ambruch* honouring Schönberg on his fiftieth birthday, 13th September, 1924.

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<sup>5</sup> *Music in World Crisis* by Adolf Weissmann.



## *Towards a Rationale of Criticism*

BY

HENRY RAYNOR

"A critic should have none of the contractions and partialities of such as can see but a small angle of the art. . . . It is not unusual for disputants in the arts to argue without principles; but this, I believe, happens more frequently in musical debates than any other."<sup>1</sup>

MUSIC criticism presents a number of problems that are its historical birthright. These are not capable of any final solution, and all that the practitioner can do is to consider them and decide what stand he will take against them. They are, first, the validity of *criteria* arising from the history or the technical processes of the art, and secondly, the means by which the operation of these *criteria* can be shown in the verbal terms the critic must use; thirdly, the critic's final basis of judgment is neither technical nor historic but intuitive, and its value, therefore, may be doubtful. In addition to these questions, the twentieth century is aware of a wider range of musical history than any earlier age; it is at the same time a period in which there is no *consensus* of opinion as to the value of inherited technical standards or the quality of certain phases of activity in the tradition of European music. Therefore the complexity of the critic's task is aggravated by the conditions under which he works, at a time when he is more often than not denied the space he needs in order to offer a reasoned judgment.

This final, and practical, problem shows itself to be bulky and dangerous now because the theoretical problems, the questions of standards, have left our criticism in an unhealthy state. At a time when standards are neither generally accepted nor generally applicable, it behoves the critic to be entirely forthright about the bases of his judgments, and we are only too conscious now of the fact that the most he can do under the conditions prevailing is to dismiss the new works that demand his attention with a curt two or three lines of comment that results from an attitude to music that he cannot state but which must be deduced by any reader who wishes to take his writing seriously.

The present state of criticism is largely the result of the present state of music. The critic exists in a situation in which neither aesthetically, morally nor socially is there any clear and generally acceptable foundation for his work; he has, therefore, to become analyst, historian, musicologist or propagandist, pinning his faith here or there, judging from *criteria* satisfactory to himself but unavailable to his readers. If it were not that contemporary musical activity is based, not on a single strand of musical tradition developing a single group of factors in a consistent direction, but on many and varied aspects of the entire European tradition developing almost every factor of past technique

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<sup>1</sup> Burney: "An Essay of Musical Criticism": *General History of Music*, Introduction to volume three.

in a manner that almost defies the ordering critical intelligence to find coherence, the unavailability of *criteria* would be of little importance. But now, almost every judgment is modified by our peculiar attitudes, our choice of allegiance, our particular contemporary sympathies. It is therefore important for the critic to remember how the bases of his task can be determined and how his instinctive judgments of quality can be corroborated by appeal to definite musical facts. Whilst it is not possible to frame any system of law within which criticism can or should operate, the real purpose which it serves and the means by which it can best serve that purpose are matters largely ignored but easily accessible.

First of all, the critic's equipment is essentially personal—understanding and musical sensibility: depth of knowledge can and does assist him, but it is not one of his necessities as it is a necessity of the musicologist. "The essential fundamental equipment of the critic", writes Alan Storey,<sup>2</sup>

"is simply an intuitive critical faculty. He may, in the course of his work, acquire a wider knowledge and a more extensive experience, based on recollection, comparison, *etc.*; but unless he instinctively knows the good from the indifferent and the bad, unless he can distinguish between inner rapture and contagious mass excitement, he is not a fit critic".

Frankly, then, criticism is not a science, objectively deliberating judgments on a factual basis susceptible of rational proof: it is in essentials a personal response to art, its value arising from the quality of the response rather than from the depth of learning or executive ability on which the critic can draw. It is essential that the critic be a man capable of recognizing the values manifested by a work, whether or not he is capable of offering a fine analysis of the complexities of harmony and counterpoint which embody those values. "We cannot get away from the critic's tempers, his impatience, his soreness, his friendships, his enthusiasms amatory and other", wrote Shaw, justifying his personal and untechnical criticism, and announcing that politics and religion might be touched by a work under discussion, and therefore become valid *criteria*.

"It should certainly be", he wrote,<sup>3</sup> "his point of honour—as it is certainly his interest if he wishes to avoid being dull—not to attempt to conceal them or to offer their product as the dispassionate *dictum* of infallible omniscience. If the public were to receive such a self-exhibition by coldly saying, 'We don't want to know the sort of man you are: we want to know whether such a work or performance or artist is good or bad', then the critic could unanswerably retort, 'How on earth can you tell how much my opinion is worth until you know the sort of man I am?'"

On the other hand, the critic's external references are objective; the place of a work in the historical context of music is often debatable, but what is then debated is a matter of fact. The manner in which it is written, the technical and stylistic devices it employs, are again matters beyond dispute. "The intuitive critical faculty" can have nothing to say about modulations, double-counterpoint or extended superior pedals as things in themselves; its concern

<sup>2</sup> Alan Storey: "Lions and Unicorns", *Ballet Today*, November, 1948.

<sup>3</sup> Bernard Shaw: *Music in London*, Vol. 1. (Constable.)

is with the work in which they are features, the ideas of which they are embodiments. R. G. Collingwood, in *The Principles of Art*, laid it down as the critic's duty to determine the answer to the question, "Is this art?", asked of the various works brought to his attention. This seems to be a purely objective task until we realize that it is almost impossible to reach a generally accepted definition of art and that the question of a work's artistic value rests not on the use it makes of the technical raw materials on which the composer can draw, but on intangibilities of thought and expression that motivate his employment of technical resources.

The attempt to dominate criticism by technical standards has been made frequently enough in the past, but the canons of behaviour thus established have never coalesced before they have been outdated. The critic who bases his work on the postulates of an accepted technique is invariably forced into the position of those who judged late Beethoven by early Haydn, or Wagner by middle-period Beethoven, and so on. Technical *criteria*, the most nearly incontrovertible and objective of standards, are ephemeral in the extreme once they are treated as though they can be given the force of law. Ultimately, the critic is a judge who can appeal to no law but that which he instinctively accepts and cannot finally formulate. Such assistance as he receives from objective *criteria* is assistance not in judging but in gaining sufficient understanding of any work to be able to offer a reasoned and reasonable judgment. Once he allows technical *criteria*, or his experience of the historical context in which new works must take their place, to harden into a system of law, he is closing his mind to new works in spite of the fact that they find a place in the context by which he judges them. As T. S. Eliot writes,

"No poet, no artist of any sort, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation, is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You cannot value him alone; you must set him, for contrast and comparison, amongst the dead. I mean this as a principle of aesthetic, not merely historical criticism".

Mr. Eliot continues:—

"To conform [to tradition] merely would be for the new work not to conform at all; and it would not be new, and therefore would not be a work of art. We do not say that the new is more valuable because it fits in, but its fitting in is a test of its value".<sup>4</sup>

Whatever our standards are, they are wrong if they leave no room for the new.

We cannot, however, dismiss the objective and intellectual *criteria* entirely and approve that which is congenial to us, appealing to the unaided decisions of our "intuitive critical faculty" unexamined from the standpoint of our historical and technical standards. Such a criticism would as quickly stultify itself as one based purely on technical grounds. The appeal to an unaided taste would fail because the new is that which in the long run creates a taste for itself, which is often not immediately understood; it is the expression of a new complex of ideas, a new state of mind. Sometimes we are in sufficient sympathy with it to wish to know it better, to find that it is operating, so to speak,

<sup>4</sup> T. S. Eliot: "Tradition and the Individual Talent", *Selected Essays*. (Faber and Faber.) 1932.

on sympathetic areas of our own minds; but when that does not happen, unless we are prepared to learn what the new work means, we are denying our "intuitive critical faculty" the opportunity to reach a satisfactory conclusion.

"One of the most elementary lessons that people must learn if they are to come to terms with anything outside the most habit-ridden contents of their own minds", wrote Tovey, "is that greatness in art is not a matter of taste at all".<sup>5</sup>

That which is not to our taste is an expression of ideas that we reject, and the critic's necessary statement is whether those ideas are expressed with truth: he has no argument against the distasteful work which is not ultimately an argument against the ideas it embodies.

It is from this point of view that a clear understanding of the technical and historical factors involved in a work becomes of value to the critic. T. S. Eliot, in his essay, "The Uses of Criticism", wrote of "comparison and analysis" as the "chief tools of the critic". Virgil Thomson has written:—

"The clinical signs of quality are:—(i) a certain strangeness in the musical texture; (ii) the ability of a work to hold one's attention; (iii) one's ability to remember it clearly; (iv) the presence of technical invention, such as novelty of rhythm, of contrapuntal, harmonic, melodic or instrumental device".<sup>6</sup>

Although certain of these *criteria* are subjective, Thomson insists on technical achievement as two of the four principle guides to quality; he does not suggest that its presence without the accompaniment of the subjective, instinctive signs is of any permanent value.

If, then, a grasp of the technical achievement of a work is a tool the critic can use in his task of reaching a considered judgment, it is necessary to decide precisely how he can use it and what conclusions he can draw from it. "Technical achievement" as a thing in itself, is almost an illusion: the craft which a composer inherits or acquires from his predecessors, by means of which he learns the various effective ways of doing what a work demands, is not a matter for praise in itself. We praise a plumber, a carpenter or a builder for his utilization of the acquired technique of his work; his duties do not go beyond the task of applying skilfully the rules he has learnt to the task in hand. The composer cannot work simply by means of applying rules that have been handed down to him ready-made. He starts, we hope, by having a statement to make which has not been made before; therefore, the rules that can be deduced from earlier statements can be applied only with limited effectiveness, for a work written in entire conformity with the canons of past art would fail to be new and would therefore fail to be art. We cannot, therefore, as we deduce the laws of fugue from *Der Kunst der Fuge*, believe that Bach had those laws noted verbally for musical illustration; the treatment he gave to his subject gave rise to the laws.

There are, then, two false attitudes to artistic technique: the first is to assume canons in obedience to which a work is created. The second is to assume any work to be imaginatively composed in the abstract before its

<sup>5</sup> Donald Tovey: "Elgar", in *Essays and Lectures on Music*. (Oxford University Press.) 1949.

<sup>6</sup> Virgil Thomson: "The Art of Judging Music", in *Music and Criticism*, edited by R. T. French. (Harvard University Press.) 1948.

composer casts about for the forms, harmonies and instrumentation it demands. The true relationship is more involved, like that of chicken and egg: the new expression is an equation between the statement it makes and the technical performance which exists only as the one possible answer to the demands of that expression, as the expressions made by Beethoven in the first movements of the *Eroica* and Ninth symphonies are equated with ambiguities of tonality and the reconciliation of tonal clashes. Form and manner cannot, in a work of art, be divorced from matter, for they are simply its embodiment. "The forms themselves", wrote R. G. Collingwood,

"are no doubt real; the power by which an artist constructs them is no doubt worthy of attention; but we are only frustrating our study of it in advance if we approach it in the determination to treat it as though it were the conscious working out of a conscious purpose, or, in other words, technique".<sup>7</sup>

"Technique" as the conscious application of acquired skill, like the technique of the carpenter, appears in music only in the final polishing-up process, and can be seen in such matters of calculation as Beethoven's habitual reinforcement of the orchestral celli with violas at moments when it is necessary for them to carry melodic weight, or Elgar's inaudible warming-up of the bass clarinet so that its voice will be clear and lucid when it has its individual contribution to add to the texture of the music. The whole application of such "devices" as dominant preparation of a new key is never susceptible to rule: we could not formulate any system under which it is right to insist upon a new dominant and outside which such insistence would be ungrammatical or fallacious, for the device applies only when the composer's statement demands it. We can, of course, list the known methods of employing such a device and resolving dissonances, moving into a cadence, and so on; these are not, however, rules by which the composer is guided in actually creating music.

It is the critic's duty, therefore, to consider technique and to employ the method of analysis only in relation to the matter of the work. When Shaw analysed "To be or not to be" in the manner of a programme note—"The subject is stated in the infinitive mood"—he was demonstrating once for all that technical terms used for their own sake are meaningless. But the technicalities of music exist for the purpose of making statements; and musical experience, together with a musical learning that may not in the last resort be particularly extensive, will give the critic and his reader some preparatory knowledge of the work, and some outline, however incomplete and skeletal, of its purpose, if those technicalities are related to the mood, emotional atmosphere and so forth of a new work, and related to the appearance of similar devices in other of the composer's works where their effect is better known.

We are, for example, continually reminded of the view of Mahler's music that has become traditional in this country—its *folie de grandeur* and its occasional lapses into vulgarity, its neurotic attempt to reach simplicity through sophistication and its explosion of symphonic form by an attempt to cram it full of everything in the composer's experience. We very rarely hear, and then

<sup>7</sup> R. G. Collingwood: *The Principles of Art*. (Oxford University Press.) 1938.



only from "minority" critics, of the aspect of Mahler's work which is excitingly novel and which has indirectly and unexpectedly exerted a considerable influence on contemporary music: it is perhaps easier to voice the judgments of past critics who had even less opportunity than ourselves to come to terms with this music than to grasp the reality of an eccentric but important *corpus* of work. Therefore, although we cannot divorce the particular functions of music from the finished work, these particular functions—harmony, rhythm and the like—if they are developed idiosyncratically, are as much the gateway to the composer's meaning as words and imagery are to the poet's. The fact, therefore, that Mahler's *concertante* style of orchestration—the strange simultaneous achievement of extremes of colour and simplicity that springs directly from his inverted sophistication—is technically a contribution to music of considerable importance, being at the same time a technical result of the music's meaning or emotional content, is one that should not escape the critic, whatever his temperamental aversion from the music. He will find in this style a clue to Mahler's concentration on the ideal and idea of childhood, for Mahler's orchestration recalls the sharp, clear definition of a child's vision.

Beyond such a point, however, the analysis of music cannot go without stepping from the bounds of criticism into those of musicology. It is not our intention to suggest that music should be deliberately approached by this technical back-door; the critic is wiser if he looks for meaning and purpose in the works he must consider, and adopts analysis only as a means of proving his statements or of explaining his attitude to works that stand somewhat on the rim of popular esteem; it is one of his necessary defences against the temperamental blind spot which might invalidate his judgment. If a work exists that is deliberately and by its composer's design no more than an exercise in technique, we listen to it with our musical, as distinct from our calculatory, instincts disengaged, as we might listen to a play of Shakespeare avoiding the meaning of the words but endeavouring to assimilate its qualities of vocabulary and grammatical structure. As Roger Sessions says:—

"The value of *Die Kunst der Fuge* and Hindemith's *Ludus Tonalis* is neither enhanced nor diminished by the technical complexities these works embody—these complexities belong to the essence of the works and would otherwise be meaningless and tasteless".<sup>9</sup>

The second of Eliot's tools, "comparison", or the understanding of the place taken by individual works in the context of musical tradition, is equally an objective tool. That such and such a work extends particular ideas or builds on in the direction first attempted by an earlier work, or stands between this and that other work in its mode of construction is a point that is no more than factual, depending for its appreciation on no special mental sympathy. Any work with which the critic has to deal is part of the history of music, which is what we mean by suggesting that a work has been influenced by A. and has influenced C.; and whilst it would be damnable to listen to every new piece offered to us in order to trace the "influences" exerted upon it or the sources from which it derives, we need so to examine the music that eludes or

<sup>9</sup> Roger Sessions: "The Scope of Music Criticism", in *Music and Criticism*.



irritates us, for the work that arouses our immediate sympathy discloses its affinities of thought and method painlessly, as we assimilate it.

The concept of "comparison" as a critical tool, then, assists the practitioner to find a real pattern of development in musical history. Eliot has shown that art is an order in which every valid work takes its place, rather than a hierarchy ascending from the lesser to the greater; its nature is not settled, but is expanded, modified or more clearly defined by each new work. The masterpiece has a place in musical history that is not totally explained by a mere discussion of "influences" exerted or received, for all real developments and revolutions in art are revolutions in the expressive power of whatever medium is involved; the musical revolutionary does not deal in abstract or intellectually applied modifications of existing practice, but discovers instead the point at which the forms he knows are capable of expansion, as Wagner found and worked from the point at which symphonic methods applied to an external drama which in its turn enriched them. Protest against the revolutionary is not directed against the external modifications he initiates, but plainly and simply against the noise his music makes. Scheibe, attacking the fantastic complexity of Bach's counterpoint, Weber's gibe at the long solemnity that introduces Beethoven's fourth Symphony, the chorus of horror that inveighed against Wagner's orchestration, harmony and style of declamation—these were directed against innately expressive, and not external features of new music.

Therefore, realizing that there is no revolution that is not a revolution in expressive power, we see the importance to the critic of the width of musical experience that will enable him to see a large area of the tradition. What does not succeed in announcing an original statement is not art; we must look for the originality of matter that prompts originality of manner. Similarly, we must not recognize as art anything that has no link with some part of the broad general tradition to which it is added, and it is only our experience of music that can show us the general tradition alive in a new work.

It therefore follows that the ideal critic would be one to whom no school of composers, no musical style and no work of genuine quality is displeasing; he would be capable of realizing why a work is a failure whilst accepting all that is good in it and appreciating the conditions under which it has been created; but such openness of mind is not a qualification to be desired unconditionally, for a mind as open as a dutch barn is at the mercy of every wind of opinion. As the tools enable the critic to come to terms with the ideas that have motivated the music, his final terms of reference will almost certainly lie outside the boundaries of the art. "You can never draw the line", writes Eliot,<sup>10</sup>

"between aesthetic and moral or social criticism; you cannot draw a line between criticism and metaphysics; you start with literary criticism, and however rigorous an aesthete you may be, you are over the frontier into something else sooner or later".

So far, this study has stressed the idea of the assistance that the critic can obtain from those aspects of music which present him with objective, incontrovertible fact and offer him entry to a work by the tradesman's entrance if its

<sup>10</sup> T. S. Eliot: "A Dialogue on Dramatic Poetry", in *Selected Essays*.

front door is closed to him. He will do well to train himself, so far as he can, by attentive listening, thought and study, to accept the widest range of music, but only natural sympathy with the composer's intention will create the intuitive acceptance from which his best work springs. The critical interpretation which clarifies our view of a work is the only justification for a criticism which attempts more than the mere directives of the standard guide books. Art itself formalizes its creator's internal or external experience, develops from his internal awareness of life or from the external joys or vicissitudes he meets; the critical mind functions, at its highest, in reformulating, not the original experience, but its own experience of the work, in its own terms, for the critic is essentially as much an interpretive artist as the conductor, actor or pianist, though his terms of reference are wider; they may be a study of the work through the technique which embodies it, through the historical or social complex which led the composer towards it, or simply through the hit-or-miss method of intuition, but his work in chief is the communication of his experience of the music, his account of what it means to him, as it affects him; for his experience will not essentially be the same as that of the composer, however closely the two may be related. As the composer is expressing what is in his mind regarding some experience that has prompted him to create a work, so the critic is broaching the task of accounting for an experience; he is expressing what C. E. Montague called "his own, individual, autonomous, possibly uncommon or wayward sense of something that occurred to him".<sup>11</sup>

If analysis and comparison are tools, they are tools to the understanding of a work, and such understanding can only be personal and subjective, never objective and universal; the tools are tools towards an estimation of the work as an elucidation and enlargement of human experience. It is for this reason that the critic has a duty to make his standards plain: it follows from our investigation that the musical *cliché* is an expressive *cliché*, that clumsy, ill-digested or lifeless works are the manifestation of similar flaws in experience and in the thought that develops from it, but ultimately the critic is concerned with the quality of the experience and thought themselves. It is for that reason that Shaw insisted upon moral, social, religious and political *criteria* as standards of unquestionable validity so long as they cast light upon or stimulate thought about any work. The critical failure is to isolate art from the general activity of living—the loftiest of ivory towers is a negative reaction to society—and the triumph is to make the link between the work and the listener's life incontrovertibly plain, to show the connection between A., B. and C. and the music under discussion.

A judgment must be made which is, in the last analysis, a judgment of value because the arts are concerned with aspects of life which, however they are discussed, are discussed from a point of view that at least implies a statement of value. But, paradoxically, the critic does not exist to be "right" or "wrong"; he exists to experience music and to formulate his experiences.

<sup>11</sup> C. E. Montague: "The Critic as Artist", *A Writer's Notes on his Trade*. (Penguin Books.) 1949.

"It is not the yes and no of judgment that is valuable to other people", writes Virgil Thomson,<sup>12</sup> "though one's original yes and no of judgment may be the determinant of a lifetime's activity. What other people get profit from is the activity itself. That is why, just as an emotional reaction is more significant for its force than its direction, a musical judgment is of value to others less for the conclusions reached than for the methods by which they have been, not even arrived at, but elaborated, defended and expressed".

Criticism pure and simple is neither written nor meant to be read as scientific analysis, a guide to aesthetic propriety or a tabulation of laws, but for the consideration of music in the light of the critic's own experience, sensitivity and knowledge. He may often be wrong, and there is no critic who has never made a mistake; that does not ultimately matter, for he cannot write with sincerity from a position he has clearly worked out and defined for himself and his readers without casting some light upon the work he is considering. The important thing is the question of his position, his standards. Insofar as he cannot avoid raising, if only by vague implications, questions of value, he can only criticize faithfully when he does so from standards which are consciously adopted and conscientiously held.

#### REVIEWERS

|             |                       |
|-------------|-----------------------|
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| E. H. W. M. | — E. H. W. MEYERSTEIN |

<sup>12</sup> Virgil Thomson, *op. cit.*

## Students produce Opera in New York

BY

EVERETT HELM

THE situation of opera in the United States is probably the most absorbing question confronting American musicians to-day. As is generally known and freely admitted, opera has been in a slump for many years in the United States. Following the considerable activity of the nineteenth century, during which opera flourished to a greater or lesser extent throughout the country, the number of opera houses has gradually fallen off to the near-vanishing point and to-day only New York's "Met" can produce a season of opera comparable to that of a European opera house.

Activity is increasing, however, in another quarter—among the schools, colleges and universities. In recent years, one "opera workshop" after another has been established in these institutions, and to-day, several hundred are in existence, giving performances of extant chamber operas and, what is more important, commissioning and stimulating the composition of new works, adapted to their needs. It is widely predicted that a new form of American opera will evolve through the help of such "opera workshops".

I recently saw a performance that demonstrates this trend; the Juilliard School of Music in New York, the country's most famous conservatory, produced two chamber operas: *Henny Penny* by Jerzy Fitelberg and *The Play of Robin and Marion* by Darius Milhaud. The first is a children's opera in which the cast (ages 9-12) were all pupils of Hunter College Elementary School. The orchestra was a larger one of professional dimensions and was made up of adults. The work itself is designed to be amusing (amusing, that is, for children; the adult audience found it pretty boring and silly), and it hardly merits discussion. *Robin and Marion* was produced by the Juilliard Opera Theatre, and the entire production—singers, mimes and orchestra—was the work of Juilliard School students.

Your correspondent went to this performance with unusual interest, for he had conducted the world *première* of *Robin and Marion* in the Hessian State Opera in Wiesbaden last October. In some ways it is unfair to compare the two performances, for Wiesbaden used a professional apparatus and the Juilliard School was an amateur affair. Nevertheless, the piece remains the same, and comparison of the two versions produces some interesting results. Let it be said at the outset that the work had a greater success in New York than in Wiesbaden; and let it be said immediately thereafter that the Wiesbaden performance was better. Is this discrepancy due to differences in national (or local) temperament? Perhaps this is a partial explanation. *Robin and Marion* is a pastoral comedy based on the thirteenth-century musical play of Adam de la Halle and composed by the contemporary Frenchman Darius Milhaud; it is extremely French in character—a gay, light, unassuming piece that is not "theatrical" in the usual sense of the word. The New York audience is doubtless more cosmopolitan, more receptive to this distinctly Gaelic *divertissement* than Wiesbaden's was. But that is not the whole explanation. The Juilliard students, whose performance was imperfect in many ways (the *ensemble* was poor, the acting "hammy", the voices sometimes inadequate), brought a freshness and vitality to the work that saved it from being boring, and that at once caught the interest of the audience. The students overdid the comedy at times; the clowning tactics of the three-man "horse" (the old variety show trick of manipulating the front and rear ends of the animal independently) were pushed *ad absurdum*. But certain effects of staging were extraordinarily effective. The greatest mistake was that the five-man orchestra was placed on the stage without a conductor, with the result that *ensemble* was often entirely non-existent.

After the two short operas had been heard, there was a panel discussion on "opera in the United States, To-day and To-morrow". Ten eminent musicians including Virgil

Thomson, Gian Carlo Menotti, Douglas Moore and Norman dello Joio took part in this free discussion.

Although they reached no conclusions, the members of the panel expressed various points of view, raised many problems, indulged in their pet "gripes", and approximated unanimity only in their uncharitable and carping attitude towards the "Met", in whose defence Herbert Graf did what he could. Graf, agreeing in principle that it is a pity that the "Met" does practically no contemporary (least of all American) operas, pointed out that the management cannot risk the empty houses often evoked by modern operas—citing as an example, the failure of one of Menotti's own works. Others, including Menotti, felt that it was the *duty* of the "Met" to present new operas; one speaker said that the "Met" should be left to play *Aida* and *Walküre*—should be "written off", in short—and composers should concentrate their efforts on writing for schools and university stages. It was then pointed out that such being the case no American composer had a chance of getting anything but a chamber opera performed, and what kind of a situation was that? Broadway was discussed as another possible outlet, but nobody took a very happy view of the commercial restrictions it imposes on the composer's style. In the end, nobody was able to offer a panacea, but all were agreed that opera, in some form, is in for a rejuvenation and a revival in the U.S.A., and that the schools, colleges and universities were destined to play a leading rôle.

## First Performances

### FRICKER'S SYMPHONY No. 2, Op. 14

PRAISE is due to the LSO's decision to give a double performance of Fricker's second Symphony. Maybe the time will come when an audience interested in such a *première* will not need another first performance (in this case of Bliss' mediocre *scena The Enchantress*) in between, and three further works to set the concert going. Perhaps the time has come, for many people left before the second performance of the Symphony; perhaps because by that time, if they had really listened, they were exhausted. The Symphony is beyond escape, though certainly not beyond criticism. It contains beautiful passages and sections which are so obvious that it will not be unfair not to enlarge on them. (Fricker's teacher, Seiber, will possibly raise his eyebrows at the adjective "beautiful" which he may like to see replaced by "good", but at the same time he will no doubt agree that not everything beautiful is bad, and that artistic "goodness" may not only be the cause, but even the effect of beauty.) What is essentially wrong with the Symphony is that it is not yet an honest work. This is not meant in a libellous sense. We have arrived at a stage where musical honesty is an exception even among good composers. By musical honesty I mean two things. Firstly, the "must". Every note, every phrase must be a "must", must be inevitable not only in regard to what precedes and follows it, but also as the only possible and absolutely necessary expression of the composer's creativity. Secondly, every square inch of texture must have passed, completely and distinctly, through the creative mind's ear. This requirement one might also call musical realism. There are pages at the end of the Symphony where I would undertake to change the score without anyone noting anything amiss. Through having less in the score one might even hear more. As for honesty of expression, Fricker's musical contents are still too often translations of bygone thoughts, and/or basically negative. This is the whole crisis of our late age: most things having already been said, it remains for most either to translate them or to negate, contradict them, or to do one on top of the other. One sympathizes with everyone facing this dilemma, one knows it even from one's own



experience as a writer, but the inescapable fact remains that art does not arise from such sources; where there is no "must" there is no art, and if and when the artist has nothing new to offer he has to shut up instead of being competent. Of course, he will always have a ready market for his machinations; I know more people who know books about and against Kant than people who know Kant. Modern music is too often about music and too seldom music: a new species has developed, a kind of absolute music which is really programme music—music describing music. Since, however, nothing is more difficult to describe in musical terms than music, we are nearing the point where the composer's programme notes are more interesting than the works which they analyse. In places, this is almost true of Fricker's programme note: "A further point is that the increasing length of the three sections of the first movement is paralleled by the increasing length of the three movements themselves". To express it perhaps still more distinctly, the root (take the word in its common, as well as its mathematical sense) of the work is the first movement. Splendid, but when you get on to the work it more or less successfully describes the programme note, rather than *vice-versa*. It is of course impossible to give a complete picture of the Symphony's "evitability" within the present space, but (un)fortunately Fricker supplies us with a miniature illustration. When I go to hear a symphony, I do not go to be fooled. In bar 11–12 of his 1st movement (see first music example), however, Fricker remembers the word "deceptive cadence" in its literal, unmusical sense. In the first place, arising as it does out of a panchromatic theme, the sudden diatonic D major of bar 11½ (stressed, it will be observed, both texturally and dynamically) lacks, in itself, compulsion and consequence. Fricker is not, of course, a madman, so that there is some sort of preparation—harmonically by dint of what is immediately felt to be the Symphony's basic tonality of D, and thematico-rhythmico-structurally at punctuation point number two, *i.e.* bar 7. But music needs more than excuses. The D major scale motif contradicts its harmonic premises without offering anything in (re)turn, except that *it is itself promptly and blatantly contradicted*. In music, however, two contradictions don't cancel each other out, and just as one has resigned oneself to something in the way of a D major close, notes, texture and dynamics do their utmost to show one that one has been a fool to believe that the D major descent from the dominant would really turn out to be a D major cadence. For the quick ear, in fact, the confusion is enhanced by a double deception, in that one first accepts the Neapolitan degree instead of the tonic, only to be at once laughed at and admonished that this is wrong too, that we are neither at home nor in Naples, but that the E flat is the dominant of the opposite end of the harmonic world. This is what I call negative content, the sort of thing which may happen, as a little joke, in a Haydn finale (and then it can always be shown to have plenty of positive formal significance besides), but in which the old masters otherwise never indulged. It is also the kind of thing which Schönberg (whom Fricker admires as much as I do, but who never deceived anyone) did not even want to happen *seemingly*, which was why, in the initial stages of his new technique, he favoured exclusion of triadic and tonical elements: simply a method of making things as easy as possible for the listener in at first difficult circumstances, which was promptly sneered at as a "rule". The trouble is, in life as in art, that the majority of idiots and a large minority of intelligent people want to be deceived, and immediately you tell them the truth, you (psychologically speaking) cheat them. Consequently, before he can say Jack Robinson, the composer finds himself fulfilling an important social and artistic function, being truly contemporary yet approachable and the rest of it, as long as his music leads his listener (a) by the nose and (b) a nice if mildly asymmetric dance. The moral position inside his mind is dangerous, not just because to-day there often isn't much else for him to do, but also because an unprecedented number of idiots are now admitted to the ranks of experts and professionals. He is satisfying all sides, so what can there be wrong with him?—he may understandably and unjustly ask himself. To-day, he may say, art is different from what it used to be.

All this sounds as if I considered Fricker the most serious case in question, whereas he is merely the most talented one. He has provoked this tirade because the problematic aspect of his second Symphony is, owing to its very merits, a striking reminder of the



contemporary problem. So once again, this time rather unpremeditatedly, our *First Performances* feature has to content itself with a single work.

I, bars 10f.  
**Allegro moderato**,  $\text{♩} = \text{app. } 60$   
Sfr. (with lower 8ve)



II, bar 26  
**Andante**,  $\text{♩} = \text{app. } 72$   
Ob. solo



To end, then, on a lighter and more optional note, I have challenged critics of my suggestion (MR, Nov., 1951, pp. 311f.) that the Captain's theme from *Wozzeck* (*ibid.*, Ex. 1a) is a derivative from the opening theme of Beethoven's Sixth, to give me one other example of the same rhythmic structure and melodic outline. None could, and most of them have, for this (in my own opinion, by no means most important) reason, accepted my suggestion. Amusingly enough, however, Fricker (see second music example and, of course, bar 109) has (re)produced such an instance in the second movement of this Symphony. But while the phrase clearly derives, in its turn, from *Wozzeck*, it follows logically from the thematic context which lends it enough originality, and modifies it sufficiently, to place it beyond criticism.

H. K.

## Film Music and NOT Beyond

### LCMC-ICA FAILURE

"LCMC-ICA Presentations, Friday Evenings at Eight"—the London reader knows about these often interesting events. *British Documentary Films and their Music* (9th May, French Institute Cinema) promised to be especially welcome. For once, film music would be discussed and evaluated in musical terms. For once, film music's significance for music proper would be shown. The Arts Council would have spent its money on an artistic undertaking. The narrow-minded musician would have his eyes opened, the narrow-minded film-goer his ears. For once, there would be competence.

It was, in fact, impossible to make this programme uninteresting, but everything possible turned out to have been done in that direction. The subject was to be "discussed by Muir Mathieson and John Hollingsworth and illustrated by famous documentaries. Chairman: Basil Wright". First of all, there was nothing that could be called discussion. Secondly, Muir Mathieson was detained and his place taken by Ken Cameron, in my experience an unsurpassed recordist who, however, would naturally have been more interesting on the technicalities of his own job than on the untechnicalities of music. Thirdly, there were apologies. About the copies unobtained or unobtainable, and about the bad condition of the material! That was the first occasion when one desired to go home; however, one had not yet recuperated from one's expedition to Kensington. One

never did. Edward Clark started out with one of his benevolences, stimulating enough, but to no purpose in view of ensuing events. In the documentary field, he said, was assembled our most outstanding film music—a somewhat simplifying proposition which, however, could certainly have been better substantiated than by the subsequent “illustrations”. (One rarely perceived what they were supposed to illustrate, except the widespread over-amplification of sound-reproduction.) Hollingsworth delivered the ancient baby talk about the film composer’s time limits, and quoted Vaughan Williams on the subject; everyone (including myself) always does so when talking shop outside the shop, but surely the LCMC’s audience may be supposed to have heard or seen or thought all this stuff before. The climax of Hollingsworth’s revelations was reached when he quoted William Alwyn to the effect that in film music you had to be able “to express a world in a note”. The film world, maybe, though even there two notes would seem to be required, namely, “see sharp and be flat”, the augmented second symbolizing the content of the film’s 90 minutes. When Mahler wanted to express a world in a symphony, people were angry about such presumption, but when Alwyn wants to do likewise in a note, they swallow the suggestion.

Wright introduced excerpt No. 1, from the second reel of Walter Leigh’s *Song of Ceylon*, pointing out that one was going to hear “the composer’s original scoring and orchestration [*sic*]”. It will readily be imagined that despite the interest of this and other scores, the musician felt that he had been removed to a desert, had been deserted by the musicians’ body responsible for the show. No. 2 was an excerpt from the first reel of *Merchant Seamen*, whose chief interest lay in the fact that (as Cameron reminded one) this was Constant Lambert’s only documentary music. No. 3, from *Coastal Command*, illustrated what probably is Vaughan Williams’ weakest film music, and No. 8, *Waters of Time*, showed the corresponding product of Rawsthorne (who was present), giving the novice a completely wrong idea of Rawsthorne’s stature as a film composer. Texturally, it is true, this piece came as a tremendous relief but, on the other hand, no one on, or off the platform seemed to mind the musically senseless and irritating fade-outs and fade-ins dictated by the requirements of the dialogue. The excerpt was given as an example of pre-discussion between writer and composer, who had agreed between them that instead of “copying” the ocean liner’s coming out of the lock, the music should give the atmosphere of the dock area into which the ship was moving and thus, at the same time, lend “increased urgency” to the ship’s behaviour. In general, in fact, the speakers were so concerned with what the music could do for the film that they did not notice what the film did against the music, or how the music stultified itself for the film’s sake. A shattering illustration of this kind of thing was No. 4, Addinsell’s *We Sail at Midnight*, which Wright described in the most glowingly unmusical terms as a piece of real integration of music and picture, or some such achievement, and which turned out to sacrifice every ounce of musical sense and consequence to a slick and journalistic parallelism with the intercutting of the film’s shots and so forth. The poorest product of the evening, it was greeted, in prompt reaction to Wright’s propaganda, with the stormiest applause, and thus afforded the second occasion when one desired to go home.

No. 5, *I was a Fireman*, a “very old copy” of Humphrey Jennings’ story of the National Fire Service, disclosed one of Alwyn’s better efforts, though by no means (so far as one could judge) an original contribution on what can be his really creative level (see *Film Music*, MR, XI/3). No. 6, Guy Warrack’s music for *A Defeated People*, was proudly shown to contribute a musical duet in the place of a realistic reproduction of a Nazi’s interrogation, when all everyone in his senses wanted to hear was the interrogation itself: a further step down the ladder at whose bottom art ceases to be creation and becomes translation into an unsuitable medium. Instead of “illustrating” how unreal one can make reality and how much too realistic one can make music, one might have shown Warrack’s music for the picture of the last Olympic Games which after all is a documentary too and, though without similarly “original” ideas, a more logical piece of work. No. 7 was Malcolm Arnold’s *Report on Steel* (strings, brass, percussion; no woodwind) of only limited interest, whereas No. 9, Fricker’s (and the Crown Film Unit’s) *White Continent*,

was the one really outstanding sample of the evening, offering (beside a basic thought of Schönberg's *Ode to Napoleon*) not only (as was pointed out) an unforeshadowed and happy instance of Fricker's humour, but an equally surprising tender texture and, beyond that, perhaps one of the best pieces the composer has turned out to date. In No. 10, *Eldorado*, Lutyens was heard to give the positive counterpart to Addinsell (No. 4) in that she made her music hang together despite its parallel changes to the shots. Amusing it was, though, to hear Cameron say that she just "hinted" at the visual of this largely dialogue-less travelogue: now we know what, in film land, amounts to no more than a hint.

Severe criticism must extend to the LCMC's, the ICA's, and, after or before all, the Arts Council's failure to see to it that this presentation was a responsible account of the place of film music in general and of British documentary music in particular in present-day society and future music, and that no painstaking delineation was given of the many cultural risks and dangers, as well as the few but highly important artistic chances and blessings of one of the most potent factors in our civilization, which it is our culture's duty constantly to face. If such is impossible within the domain of the International Society for Contemporary Music, if the children in Film's Wonderland are to remain the sole arbiters of filmic art, we know why we felt like going home all the time: because soon there will be nothing else for culture to do.

One of the films which was not shown and should have been is Alexander Shaw's—a man to be remembered for, *inter alia*, *Under the City*, *Airmail*, *The Future is in the Air*, *Penicillin* and, above all, *Instruments of the Orchestra*, the instructional film on Britten's Purcell-Variations—*The Cumberland Story*, a COI production with music by Arthur Benjamin. Of logically progressive tonality (from B minor to the relative major, at any rate at Hampstead's Everyman Cinema where I heard it), the admittedly somewhat misgrafted score proceeds on a fairly consistently high level, with a striking title music which could do with a little less Vaughan Williams, a fairly substantial body which could do with just a trifle less Walton (hear also Benjamin's charming ballet, *Orlando's Silver Wedding*, for last year's Battersea Festival Gardens), and a really first-rate hunger march in B flat minor which would no doubt be still better if one could hear more of it.

Meanwhile Hollywood has not been slow in supplying the exceptionally significant noise-*ostinato* of a clock-rhythmic motto in the British film *White Corridors* (see *Film Music*, last MR) with its negative counterpart, the indomitable clock-motif of an in itself highly competent Westerner, *High Noon*, which is all about high noon (the running time of the film is identical in length with the time within the film which proceeds from 10.30 a.m. to after 12) and therefore needs a clock in the visual, on the sound track, and in Dimitri Tiomkin's worthless music, to remind us constantly of this fact; it ticks and ticks and ticks until even the film critics notice it. With frantic and completely untelling tautologies, by means of every easily available, superficial, conventional film trickery, the "motif" drives itself *ad absurdum* and spoils the whole point of the film, the point, that is, which it is supposed to enhance—that time is drawing ever more dangerously near. It is a real fanatic, this little motto, for even when it is at last 12 o'clock and the dreaded murderer has safely arrived, it continues as if nothing had happened, as if, in fact, it were still one minute to twelve. No, it says, I won't have it, I'm Art and therefore needn't mean anything except myself, I am a motto for motto's sake; I am, in short, a tic.

H. K.

## Concerts and Opera

### MILAN

#### *Dèbora e Jaële* at La Scala

ON 14th May the Teatro alla Scala gave the last of four performances of the first postwar revival of Pizzetti's *Dèbora e Jaële*. The composer's second opera (his first, *Fedra*, was to a text by d'Annunzio) dates from 1922, when Toscanini conducted the world *première* in Milan. The sumptuous production by Otto Erhardt and the scenic designer Nicola Benois was not the only reason for the opera's present success with the Milanese—the drama is decidedly too gripping for that—but it would be difficult to imagine *Dèbora* in the trappings of an economy *Trovatore* or *Madame Butterfly*. It is decidedly an indigenous work, and though it has been given in Germany, Brussels, and Buenos Aires, its popularity, if such is the correct word, is likely to remain confined to Italy—much as do the stage works of composers like Alfano, Respighi, Zandonai, and Montemezzi.

Pizzetti wrote the *libretto* for *Dèbora* himself: it is an admirable affair, constructed on Greek models. The Biblical story (from the *Book of Judges*) is seen through the eyes of Jael; departing from the Old Testament version, she falls in love with Sisera, the Canaanite general, and is forced to kill him with the only weapons at hand (a hammer and steel peg) when the victorious Israelites advance on their tent. Pizzetti scores for a large orchestra, including tamtam and celesta which lend a certain atmospheric flavour. The musical construction is symphonic in the broadest sense: one- or two-bar phrases are repeated and developed at different levels and colourings, though some of the choppiness inherent in this method of writing affects the recitative portions of the opera and makes for monotony and tonal instability. Debora's great prophetic oration to the people of Kedesh in act I and her music in act III have, unlike that for Jael and Sisera which seems to radiate currents of passion that never become flowing melody, a rock-like tonality that befits the dominant rôle of the opera.

La Scala put on an excellent show of it. Cloe Elmo was an unforgettable Debora—moving and majestic in her delivery of the seeress' words. Clara Petrella gave a remarkably intense Jael, and the tenor, Gino Penno, who needs to watch phrasing and vocal production, had the ringing high notes needed for Sisera. Memorable contributions in other rôles were the Mara of Vittoria Palombini and Saturno Meletti as the madman Jesser. Antonino Votto, who conducted, is reported to have been a pupil of Toscanini, but the connection between the master's unflagging musicianship and this routine stick-waving seemed very remote indeed.

#### *Don Pasquale* (13th May) and *Don Carlo* (22nd May)

DURING the few weeks that I was in Italy I found no first-rate conducting, save for the efficient direction of Argeo Quadri during part of an evening of ballet at La Scala. Under the circumstances it would be unfair to judge an orchestra that seemed to have some first-rate players among its violins and woodwinds, though sharing customary Italian defects among the brass. *Don Pasquale* was a sorry affair; it replaced a scheduled production of *Linda di Chamounix*, which partly absolves the management from the responsibility of having scheduled an intimate work in the huge, 3,200-capacity theatre, and then having placed some of their smallest voices in the gaping breach. *Don Carlo*, another production by Erhardt and Benois, again had the drawback of Votto's conducting, which this time was positively rampageous. Ebe Stignani, magnificently gowned as Eboli, brought down the house in "*O don fatale*". Nicola Rossi Lemeni made an intelligent Philip II, though he does not possess the vital low F needed after the scene with the Grand Inquisitor. Gino Penno as Don Carlo, Carla Martinis as Elisabetta, Paolo Silveri as Rodrigo and Marco Stefanoni as the Grand Inquisitor completed the cast. Verdi's second version (that of 1883, which omits the Fontainebleau scene) was played.

La Scala's new productions this season, which have included revivals of Cherubini's *L'Osteria Portoghese*, Cimarosa's *Il Credulo*, *I Vespri Siciliani*, *The Rake's Progress* (first Milan performance), and the world *premieres* of Lodovico Rocca's *L'Uragano* and the Verdi Contest prizewinner, *Proserpina e lo Straniero* by Juan José Castro, concluded early in June with the first performances of *Wozzeck* in Italian.

## FLORENCE

## Fifteenth Maggio Musicale

THE *Maggio Musicale* this year neither began nor ended in May, and the most interesting productions—six Rossini operas, two new operas by living Florentine composers, and, as usual, a Seicento offering, Francesco Cavalli's *Didone*—were spaced at the rate of one or two a week, so that the critic without much time on his hands had little opportunity to savour more than a side course of this rich feast. Opening on 26th April with Rossini's twenty-first opera, *Armida* (1818), the Festival provided a generous helping of the early Rossini—the one-act *La Scala di Seta*, *La Pietra del Paragone*, and *Tancredi*; and his last two operas, *Le Comte Ory* and *Guillaume Tell*, both given in Italian. Vito Frazzi's *Don Chisciotte* had its *première* at the Teatro Comunale on 27th April with some flavourful designs by the now-reactionary Giorgio de Chirico. *Aucassin et Nicolette* by Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco shared a bill with *La Scala di Seta* on 31st May. The New York City Ballet opened a ten-day run on 18th May. Recitals and chamber-music, and concerts of the May Festival Orchestra conducted by Mitropoulos, Stokowski, Rodzinski, and Votto were interspersed among the operas.

*Tancredi*, Rossini's ninth (and first non-comic) opera, was given at the little baroque Teatro della Pergola on 17th and 19th May. The opera first appeared at La Fenice, Venice, on 6th February, 1813, when the composer was not quite twenty-one. It was successful in Paris and London, where the celebrated Giuditta Pasta gained fame in the title rôle. *Tancredi*'s opening *aria*, "*Di tanti palpiti*", later immortalized by Paganini, was as great a favourite in gondolas and barber-shops as "*La donna è mobile*" (also first heard in Venice) later became; but the tune is rather obvious and four-square now. Indeed, *Tancredi*, whose stiff, lifeless *libretto* is by Gaetano Rossi, gave the impression of being an occasional work with a few good *arias* and some interesting *ensembles*. Perhaps the best extended writing is in the prison scene which opens act II. The melting oboe melody and some delicate instrumental effects, including a touch of canon in the *ritornello* following the soprano's little F major *aria patetica*, understandably excited Stendhal's admiration. In some of the choruses the composer's own style struggles to the surface above the imitation Cimarosa, Paer, and Mozart: the *ensemble* ending act I, following the discovery of Amenaide's supposed treason, works up from a series of block chords reminiscent of the hushed quartet that follows the trumpet-call in the second act of *Fidelio*. The overture, added for the Paris *première* (Rossini used that to *Pietra del Paragone* for the first performance), uses the familiar *crescendo* device. Again, in the long duet between Amenaide and *Tancredi* in act II there is a passage that forms the basis for the *ensemble* ending the first act of *The Barber*.

Neither the production of Enrico Frigerio nor the hideous scenery of Corrado Cagli which looked like undigested Braque, could do much with the halting plot. The conducting of Tullio Serafin was accurate, but without vitality. On stage the best performance was that of Teresa Stich-Randall as Amenaide, who adapted her small and lovely voice to this dramatic *coloratura* rôle with increasing success as the evening progressed. Giulietta Simionato had the flexibility in rapid passages, though not quite the strength needed for *Tancredi*. The singing of tenor Francesco Albanese as Argirio and bass Mario Petri as Orbazzano—the rival Syracusan chiefs—was loud, but without much style.

The audience at the first night of the New York City Ballet at the Teatro Comunale was disposed to some laughter at Balanchine's grotesque poses and caricature-steps in Tchaikovsky's harmless *Serenade for Strings*, but there was plenty of applause. Jerome Robbins' *Pied Piper* (to Copland's *clarinet Concerto*) puzzled many by its madcap suggestions of rhythm-class dithyrambs; but it must be said that the total effect, like it or not,



was truly exciting, resembling a Mack Sennett film run in reverse. The lighting effects of Jean Rosenthal deserve special mention. Chabrier's *Bourée Fantastique* (to which a plush fragment from his opera *Gwendoline* was added) showed the essential Balanchine, a gifted mixer of styles from Nijinsky, roughly, to Martha Graham.

## PARIS

### Exposition of Twentieth-Century Masterpieces

THE Exposition of Twentieth-Century Masterpieces was organized by the Congress for Cultural Freedom as a display of "all the abundant riches which the mind of free man has created in the first half of our century". In a sense this was overstating the case, for we had no sign at all of the drama or cinema. "Creative thinking" was represented by a series of conferences and debates by noted literary personages (including Salvador de Madariaga, André Malraux, Katherine Anne Porter, and William Faulkner); and an exciting exhibition of painting and sculpture from Renoir to Mondrian at the Musée d'Art Moderne took care of the fine arts. The primary emphasis was on music, and a series of twenty-five concerts, ballets and operas, as well as seven chamber-music concerts, was organized by the Exposition Committee, under the direction of Nicholas Nabokov, between 30th April and 1st June.

There was some criticism in the left-wing press of the political aims of the organizers. In a front-page editorial on 6th May *Combat* restyled the Exposition "Le Festival du N.A.T.O."—a position no doubt taken up because of generous American financial backing, but having more to do, probably, with the non-engagement of certain French musical institutions like the Ballet of the Théâtre de l'Opéra. It had been planned originally to invite student groups to take part in the Festival; but in the end it was the Jeunesses Musicales and students of the Paris Conservatory who largely benefited.

Eight large orchestras, four of them foreign, three visiting opera companies, three choruses, and two ballet companies performed during the Festival, which began with a concert devoted to "Victims of Twentieth-Century Oppression". A new Poulenc *Stabat mater* was played on this occasion, together with Bach's *Magnificat* and Cantata No. 6. The Boston Symphony Orchestra began its first European tour at the Opéra on 6th May; on the 8th it celebrated (under Pierre Monteux) the 39th anniversary of *The Rite of Spring* première at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées. The Berlin RIAS Orchestra conducted by Ferenc Fricsay gave two concerts on 23rd and 24th May, the first of music by Bartók; the second presenting for the first time in Paris a concert suite from the Shostakovich opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, which *Pravda* (January, 1936) called "a tissue of groans, shrieks, and howls". The Orchestre de la Suisse Romande under Ansermet introduced Frank Martin's new violin Concerto to Paris on the 16th; and the Augusteo Orchestra of Rome together with the Chorus of the Santa Cecilia Academy appeared on the 28th and 29th. French orchestras included the Orchestre des Concerts Lamoureux, which opened and closed the Exposition; the Orchestre National de la Radiodiffusion Française, which performed Schönberg's *Erwartung* along with Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex* on the 20th; the Orchestre de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire and the Orchestre du Théâtre National de l'Opéra.

The Vienna State Opera performances of *Wozzeck* on 2nd and 3rd May (the first stage production in Paris) were well received, but the other major operatic import, *Billy Budd*, brought over from Covent Garden on the 26th and 27th, was not a success. Beginning at nine, the opera was not over until nearly one in the morning. The French critics hit it hard. The reception of Britten's opera (there were a few enthusiasts, let it be admitted) should demonstrate a need for caution and more considered judgment before calling a work a "masterpiece" on the strength of past achievement and some undeniably interesting musical passages. The composer and British music would have been better served by a shorter work of Britten's—for example, *Les Illuminations*—and the inclusion of a work by Elgar. (There were tentative plans to bring the Hallé Orchestra in the *Dream of Gerontius*.) Vaughan Williams' *Fantasia on a Theme by Tallis* and *Dives and Lazarus*;



Walton's *Façade*; Constant Lambert's Concerto for piano and chamber orchestra; and two short choral works by Tippett and Antony Hopkins were the other British selections—at best a very modest representation of this country's music during the past half-century.

Bruno Walter and the Orchestra of the Théâtre National de l'Opéra went through some war-horses in sterling fashion at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées on 5th May. The *Prélude à l'Après-midi d'un faune* was a little stiff; but Strauss' *Don Juan* and *Das Lied von der Erde*, which brought us up to the twentieth century, showed Walter's exceptional feeling for orchestral *timbres*, especially in the strings, from which he secured some beautiful playing. Elsa Cavelti (replacing Kathleen Ferrier) and Lorenz Fehenberger were the soloists.

At the Boston Symphony rehearsal on 6th May the invigorating loudness and brash spirit of the *Marseillaise* in the nearly-empty Opéra made it plain that the band was going to live up to its reputation. In place of Honegger's Symphony No. 5, heard in London, the Paris concert had his Symphony No. 2 for strings and trumpet; otherwise the programme was the same as that heard here.

Stravinsky became a familiar figure during the first weeks of the Exposition, during which nine of his works were played. He conducted two concerts himself, including *Oedipus Rex* on the 19th, in which Cocteau's grotesque *tableaux vivants* caused a good deal of comment, both during and after the performance. However, all was ovation at the *Rite of Spring* celebration (a few weeks away from the actual anniversary) on the 8th. Monteux's fine handling of detail and the virtuoso playing of the orchestra (which I was allowed to hear only at rehearsal), together with the presence of the composer lent additional excitement to the occasion.

At the first chamber-music concert on 7th May 27-year-old Pierre Boulez (the youngest composer represented at the Exposition) and Oliver Messiaen played twice through Boulez's short two-piano work, *Structures*, and there was a demonstration by a few members of the restive audience who nearly came to blows over the strange sounds that emanated from the pianos. An uncompromising attempt to uncover the possibilities of value, dynamics and touch inherent in a 12-note row, *Structures* is composed of percussive single notes, yawning intervals, and measured rests. A charming Ibert-like wind Quintet by Elsa Barraine and the delicious Trio for oboe, clarinet and bassoon by Charles Koechlin were on the programme, which also included inconsequential works by members of the pre-war *La Jeune France*—André Jolivet and Yves Baudrier. Messiaen, another of that group, played (with Yvonne Loriod) his 50-minute-long, organ-like *Visions de l'Amen* for two pianos at the second concert on the 9th. Scriabin's last piano Sonata, a weakly rhapsodic piece in one movement, was a sleepy affair coming before De Falla's lively Concerto for harpsichord and six instruments—excellently performed by an *ensemble* under Louis de Froment.

The Augusteo Orchestra of Rome and the Chorus of the Santa Cecilia Academy under Igor Markevitch gave us two interesting programmes on the 28th and 29th, at which most of the Italian music of the Exposition was played. Interesting more in conception than in realization; for the chorus, which contains some good voices, too frequently sang off the beat, and the excellent orchestra (if we except the brass section) was not always fully under the conductor's control. This was most noticeable in a work like Kodály's *Psalmus Hungaricus*, which requires a good deal of difficult unison singing in the chorus. The Ravel (two-handed) piano Concerto, glibly played by Michelangeli, and *L'Apprenti Sorcier* (a last-minute addition to pacify the Dukas-ists) had heavy-handed, dutiful performances proving their strangeness to the Italian temperament.

On the other hand, the dazzling burlesque of Busoni's *Turandot Suite* and Casella's delightful *Paganiniana* went very well. Dallapiccola's moving *Songs of Captivity* (*Canti di Prigionia*), scored for a percussion orchestra (including pianos, harps, and bells), make use of the *Dies Irae* as a stark germinal motive: these settings of prayers by Mary Queen of Scots, Boethius, and Savonarola had been carefully prepared. Malipiero's *La Terra*, a melodically diffuse but attractively scored miniature oratorio on a text from the *Georgics*, showed the singers at their best. The most exacting work of the two evenings was

Milhaud's *Les Choéphores*, based on the Claudel translation of Aeschylus' *Oresteia*. The amazing section entitled "Présages", where the recitalist delivers Claudel's furious spondees and anapaests over a band of 15 percussion instruments (in different rhythms from the speaker) and the whistles, gaspings, and *sotto voce* murmurings of the chorus, was memorably spoken by Claude Nollier of the Comédie-Française. Elsewhere Milhaud's work (written in 1915 when he was 23) is less distinguished: here and in the finale to *Les Eumenides* (composed eight years later), which was also played, glutinous orchestration and monotonous sing-song passages for chorus succeed only in obscuring the text.

American works at the festival were little more conspicuous than British ones. Barber, Copland, Piston and William Schuman appeared an early programmes; Charles Ives' massive, thorny *Concord Sonata* was played at one of the chamber-music concerts. The major American contribution was the Virgil Thomson-Gertrude Stein opera, *Four Saints in Three Acts*. The work's first continental performances were given on 30th and 31st May by the American National Theatre and Academy (ANTA) and an all-coloured cast of 50 at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées. The composer, sportingly, appeared for the occasion, and forsook his usual place in the press-room for the podium, where he conducted the Colonne Orchestra.

The last chamber-music concert on 29th May was devoted to clearing up odds and ends. The Nederlands Kamerkoor came down for the occasion, so we heard some Dutch composers—Badings, Zagwijn and Dresden—for the first time. The most positive impressions were made by Pizzetti's brief *De Profundis* for a cappella chorus and Webern's haunting "Entflieht auf leichten Kähnen". In between the choral excerpts came Villa-Lobos' *Choros No. 5* for three horns and trombone and Křenek's slight little *Sonatina* for flute and clarinet. *Le Testament Villon* for harpsichord and recitalist by Henri Barraud concluded the programme.

It should be mentioned here that relations between the press and the Exposition authorities were not of the smoothest. The problem of coping with the large influx of journalists was left to an outside press agency which handled it in the worst possible way. The constant rudeness and distrust that many of us met with almost daily may be a common characteristic of Paris petty-officialdom; but coming in the wake of an exposition devoted to idealistic purposes the situation reflected on the organizers themselves, who could have taken pains to prevent it. However, this does not diminish in any way our respect for the sincerity of purpose with which the concerts were organized, or our recognition of the Exposition's many positive achievements.

Good humour prevailed at the closing concert at the Palais de Chaillot on 1st June, when Monteux, that most amiable of musicians, played through a final *ragout* of composers, twentieth- and nineteenth-century. Nicole Henriot gave us Liszt's first piano Concerto, for which she was less well equipped than for Fauré's *Ballade* for piano and orchestra. Monteux and the Lamoureux were in splendid form: Copland's *El Salon Mexico* had sparkling, almost Kammermusikalisch detail; and even Willem Pijper's unattractive Symphony No. 3 was played with relish. *The Swan of Tuonela*, squeezed in at the last moment, may not have aroused French enthusiasm for Sibelius, but it did ours for the excellent *cor anglais*. Homage, not too significant, to a twentieth-century neo-Wagnerian, was paid in d'Indy's 1897 *Fervaal* Prelude. Finally, with the Suite from *Der Rosenkavalier*, ebulliently, if rather swiftly played, the Exposition drew to a close.

R. R.

#### SCHÖNBERG MEMORIAL CONCERT

WIGMORE HALL, 5TH JUNE

Peter Gibbs Quartet, Anne Wood, Peter Stadlen, The L.S.O. Chamber ensemble

CONGRATULATIONS to the Anglo-Austrian Society on extending their sphere of activities! The musical progression Mozart-Schubert-Johann Strauss, redolent of "Echt Wien", and an apparent godsend to the society's programme-makers, has always been considered a pilgrim's progress by the indigenous, a rake's progress by the half-musical, and an affront to Strauss by the musical. But compromises for his holiness the box-office, though they

be ever so "Echt Wiener" compromises, cut both ways—*jubilate, spiritus puri!* So let them from now on stick to this admirable arrangement of keeping the incompatibles apart (though, be it said in parenthesis, the intra-musical leap from Mozart to Johann Strauss is longer than the one from Strauss to Schönberg), and let them meritoriously gain on a *Fledermaus* in the full Festival Hall what they lose on a Schönberg evening in the half-empty Wigmore Hall.

The Three Songs of 1933, posthumously published as op. 48, very competently first-performed on 5th June by Anne Wood and Peter Stadlen, were a disappointment on first hearing. The poems of Jacob Harbinger, on first and last perusal, plunge the depth of that mixture of flippant sentimentality and indolent folkiness which marks the inferior Berlinesque poet (diluted Erich Kästner, as it were). One would tend to agree with Dr. Carner's programme-note that "... in his anxious state of mind at the time [Schönberg] was satisfied with a text the central mood of which so closely corresponded to his own, and did not trouble to consider its literary value"; but then one remembers that Schönberg's artistic courage always grew uncompromising in adversity. Realizing, in retrospect, that Schönberg's true response to 1933 came with the *Survivor from Warsaw* of 1947, one comes to suspect that the setting of these poems was one of the composer's rare lapses, and that the music, however skilled, cannot free itself from the triviality of the text. But this judgment may have to be revised on closer acquaintance.

The last work on the programme was the *Suite* in four movements (Overture—Tanzschritte—Thema mit Variationen—Gigue) for flute, clarinet, bassoon, violin, viola, cello and piano, written in Berlin in 1927. The work was extremely well rehearsed by Peter Stadlen and brilliantly performed by him and members of the L.S.O. As Mozart in his serenades and cassations at once complied with and outgrew the tradition of Salzburg music-making, so Schönberg falls in with, and at the same time scoffs at the current Berlin notion of "Gebrauchsmusic" as exemplified by Křenek and Hindemith. The work is a substantial one in subject, treatment and duration since Schönberg, as is the habit with great composers, points to a technical problem every time he makes a musical joke.<sup>1</sup> Thus, in the jazzy "Tanzschritte" (Dance-steps), with its prolapsing syncopations, he teasingly sits on the fence between Brahms' life-long endeavours towards structural metric condensation<sup>2</sup> and a manner of popular composition which naively takes these problems to be mere rhythmical ones. Through the exciting contest between the two ideas the movement gains stature. Similarly, in the variation movement, Schönberg drains off the sentimentality of the

Theme of Gigue, Schönberg, Op. 29.



Mozart: Gigue K. 574  
(the development's minor  
version of the theme)



<sup>1</sup> The difference in the humour of this *Suite* and of similar essays by Stravinsky is instructive. Stravinsky, of course, also poses problems through his jokes, but the joke for him is that these problems exist; for Schönberg that he has found them. Stravinsky laughs at the listener for having been unaware of the problem, and proceeds to laugh to himself while providing the solution; Schönberg laughs at himself for not having discovered the problem sooner, and proceeds to laugh to the listener, inviting him to join in his solution. This may be, quite generally, the difference between profound wit and profound humour in music.

<sup>2</sup> See H. K., below, about the fourth string Quartet.

notoriously lachrimose folk-tune *Aennchen von Tarau*, which henceforth becomes an interesting *cantus firmus* rather than a varied theme. Only in the *coda*, when the ghost of the original tune, startling us, and startled itself, appears, are we aware of the antinomies on which this movement has been constructed.

The basic series, on which all movements are built, connects with the "Gebrauchsmusik" of the 'twenties as well as with the classical age of the suite by its surprising preponderance of thirds and sixths. Keys are easily suggested by it, and next to the "pantonal key" of E $\flat$ , suggested by Dr. Carner, that of G can often be distinguished. Most so in the last movement whose classical model is another Gigue in G, little known by the public, but of a harmonic boldness that endears it to the expressionist (see p. 217).

(a) seems to have been the unconsciously operative phrase. Note 1 of the series is the very E $\flat$  which would turn Mozart's 11-tone row into a 12-tone row; it "corrects" Mozart by providing the extra upbeat-quaver he misses.

P. H.

This *Suite* as well as the fourth Quartet (almost new to this country) and the Three Songs were inaccurately placed in the composer's development by *The Times* and *The Daily Telegraph*. One cannot force a writer, least of all a critic, to get his music straight, but one can take moral exception to seemingly authoritative, factual misinformation. *The Times*, while "sitting and waiting for the light to dawn" (an admirable and, for *The Times'* critical crowd, unusual occupation whose admission, however, properly belongs to the critic's autobiography), thought that the three works dated from Schönberg's "final period", while for *The Daily Telegraph* it was "the composer's most forbidding period" which was responsible for this "music of the vale of Styx". According to *The Times*, then, Schönberg's "final period" starts in the 'twenties (in reality his so-called "classical" period), while according to *The Telegraph*, what is actually his most approachable period (where, as in the fourth Quartet, his 12-tone technique and his style generally have regained a sovereign freedom) becomes his "most forbidding one". It is not pedantry that makes one expose such nonsense, but rather one's disinclination to have the less informed musician prejudiced in the wrongest possible direction. If Mr. Capell wishes to know what are, from his own viewpoint, Schönberg's most forbidding 12-tone periods, he should have an aural glance at the piano *Suite* and the wind Quintet, or, at the latest stage and on a different level, at the string Trio and the violin *Fantasia*.

The basic set of the Quartet cannot, I think, deny a horizontal sympathy with D minor; in fact the first half, on which the first violin's first phrase (bars 1-2) is built, gives the immediate aural impression of D minor with Neapolitan II. I think an unconscious motive underlies this state of affairs, for it seems that somewhere in the distant background hovers the beloved example of Mozart's D minor Quartet. In the foreground of the background, on the other hand, the influence of Brahms continues to be in evidence. Some time ago one of *The Times'* critics asked me whether I agreed with Schönberg that he was influenced by Brahms; apparently the critic didn't. I suggest that the first subject of this Quartet is a good example of the Brahmsian approach to rhythmic structure: it is neither (as Mosco Carner said in his programme note) of "classical cut" nor, on the other hand, irregular, but rather anti-regular in its implied juxtaposition of manifest asymmetry and silenced, yet still telling, symmetry. At the same time the asymmetry is by no means purely negative, but shows typically Schönbergian compression: by way of omission of the self-evident (for instance, a bar of two conjunctly descending minims on a higher level of pitch between bars 2 and 3), a new kind of symmetry is reached on the asymmetric (i.e. a-metric) level, with all manifest extensions arising out of condensations of latent rhythmic structure (e.g. bar 3; and even bar 4 is a case in point, in that its manifest extension rolls two latent minims into one).

The performance was enthusiastic and improved upon repetition (in the Third), but distonations, unbalanced textures and, worst, over-accentuations (both in number and strength) suggested the desirability of a two-years' course in Haydn, after which this very young quartet will play Schönberg satisfactorily. Keen though he was on performances of his works, the composer would have been the first to agree.

H. K.

## Covent Garden

*Rigoletto*, 14th June

This performance set me wondering about the press comments on Capuana's Puccini which granted him vigour but no refinement. I did not hear his *Butterfly*, but in *Rigoletto*, at least, I found his great dramatic and theatrical verve to be allied to a chamber-music quality rarely encountered in interpretations of this opera. Although the C minor introduction to the first act was too relaxed to do justice to its origin in Beethoven, the 6/8 accompaniment to "*Questa o quella*" had the steely resilience of closely-reined *rubato* that distinguishes the true Verdi accompanist from the barrel-organ hack,—a *rubato* whose point, namely the elegant return to *tempo*, on the singer's last four quavers in every verse, was not well realized by the Duke of Anthony Marlowe. Mr. Marlowe deputized for Kenneth Neate, at short notice, and, apart from details as above, made a good job of it and created a musically and dramatically coherent character. He nicely managed to contrast in *timbre* of voice the Duke's more rakish utterances (such as "*La donna è mobile*") with his moments of genuine emotion: thus, his second act love-duet with Gilda had a sweetness that, in spite of its many thirds and sixths, so tedious in some performances, never became cloying. Sari Barabas (Gilda) is an excellent *ensemble*-singer who really listens to what the others are doing (*cf.* the above, and the last act quartet—one of Capuana's highlights). When on her own, as in "*Caro nome*",<sup>1</sup> she was apt, occasionally, to mistake the mature steadiness of Capuana's *tempi* for mere carefulness: some goody-goody phrasing resulted, but not so much as to obscure her great basic musicality. Her voice is well-rounded, carrying and sweet, but she sometimes sings flat; most so on the 13th of the frequent Verdi-cadence V<sub>13</sub>-I.<sup>2</sup> Rothmüller as Rigoletto, on the other hand, saw eye to eye with Capuana about every *tempo*. They conspired to keep the *allegro assai moderato* of the second act's "*La rà, la rà*" well under the score's ♩ = 76 (it is usually done too fast), and yet contrived the additional upbeat *ritardando* to overshadow the descent of the entire phrase: thus, this piece, which might usually be in any old key, acquired the secretiveness, and veiled, threatening restlessness for which E minor (as Dr. Einstein would agree) is the only suitable key. Altogether, Rothmüller's musicality and presence dominated the stage. Since the position of the Jew in Gentile society is, or has been not unlike the position of an intelligent fool at the court of Mantua, it is not surprising that a Jewish artist should find it easy to don Rigoletto's fool's cap. Rothmüller's voice is so "forward" that the notes seem to drop out of his mouth; his diction is specially clear. But in *piano* he did not always support properly: the fatalism of the repeated sentence "*Quel vecchio maledivami!*" was lost in a succession of "white" notes.

Of the other rôles, Edith Coates' Maddalena succeeds where her Carmen failed: she brings off the common or garden slut in spite, or perhaps because of Verdi's stylization, whereas the same "sluttish" approach to the less stylized, less common Carmen was bound to fail. The production was dignified, and kept, justifiably, on traditional lines; but is it really necessary, in the "tempesta" of the last act, to fortify each orchestral *sforzando* with a flash of lightning popping up\* like a Jack-in-the-box? It is true, the score indicates lightning in those bars but this is hardly meant to fall on specific beats. The worst, however, in a very decent performance of this work, were the chorus, especially the men. They are quite tractable now, it appears: so will someone please tell them, not only *where* to sing *staccato* in such things as "*scorrendo uniti remota via*", but also *why*?

P. H.

<sup>1</sup> Why do flautists always slur over the recitative's semi-*staccato*, clearly marked in the score?

<sup>2</sup> This happens with many singers in most composers. Do they unconsciously mistake the E in E-D-C [V<sub>13</sub>-I<sub>1</sub>] for E in E-D-C [I<sub>4</sub>-V-I]?

\* At Covent Garden, as Mr. Hamburger points out, lightning does in fact "pop up" from ground level. Our national opera house is, of course, a law unto itself but Professor Ebert has frequently shown, at Glyndebourne and elsewhere, that stage lightning can be invoked from above, in natural and proper imitation of its celestial prototype [E.D.].



## PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA

6TH MAY

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Beethoven: Symphony No. 7

9TH MAY

Handel-Harty: *Water Music*Stravinsky: *Jeu de Cartes*

Brahms: Symphony No. 1

Conductor, Herbert von Karajan

THESE two concerts in the Royal Festival Hall terminated the rather effusive and over-extravagant advance publicity devoted to this Orchestra's three-week tour of the Continent with Herbert von Karajan. In a sense the concerts too fell into line with the publicity campaign in that the Strauss and Beethoven performances were brilliant to flashpoint and the Brahms utterly lacked substance. By contrast the Stravinsky was rightly brilliant and the Mozart and Handel were unsurpassable for the accomplishment of the Orchestra's technique and for the stylistic aptitude of the conductor's approach. Each concert, then, began at the pinnacle of perfection, only to make a pilgrimage of disillusionment culminating in a standard classic executed with great technical virtuosity, but with none of the implications of the German symphonic tradition made tellingly explicit.

All of which confirms your reviewer's opinion that Karajan's vocation lies in the opera house and not in the concert hall. His achievements in opera at Salzburg and Bayreuth have approached the highest standard and although he has been compared with Toscanini in a number of foolish respects, the two men certainly have one attribute in common: genius in the opera house and a strange lack of sensitivity on the concert rostrum.

No doubt the tour had some prestige value, having shown continental audiences that there is one good British orchestra; though in Milan and Vienna the Philharmonia violins probably seemed wiry and lacking in warmth of tone. Continentals in general, so far as we have met them, seem to share an attitude of indifference to British music with Herbert von Karajan and Walter Legge who, as founder and artistic director of the Orchestra, must share the responsibility. For a British orchestra to give sixteen concerts in Europe without offering one British work shows a lamentable prejudice against some of the finest music of this century. Representative works of Elgar, Walton, Rubbra and Rawsthorne are more than capable of holding their own in any company, however illustrious; nor will we have the old excuse that on the Continent there is an audience only for the familiar. Broadly speaking, so there is here; and concert promoters by their unenterprising practices are merely pandering to a condition which some of them at least affect to despise.

In past years, and in particular during the war, the British Council was constantly active in providing propaganda and money for British music. In these days of unrelieved austerity the British Council provides an annual target for the Treasury axe—a matter which may not properly be discussed in these pages. The point is that the best British music—and this journal wastes neither time nor space on rubbish, of British or any other origin—the best of our music should not be dependent for its presentation on grants from the British Council or any other subsidizing body. Let us take stock of modern British music: and then let us all—including the Philharmonia Orchestra—play the best of it not only without apology but with a proper appreciation of its sterling quality and resilient staying power.

G. N. S.

## BEETHOVEN AND MOZART

Beethoven's violin Concerto (Schneiderhan, the London Symphony Orchestra, c. Krips, Festival Hall, 20th April). The Ninth Symphony (Covent Garden Orchestra, c. Kleiber, Royal Opera House, 19th May) and Beethoven's and Mozart's C minor piano Concerti (Peter Wallfisch, the Haydn Orchestra, c. Newstone, Chelsea Town Hall, 15th April).

SCHNEIDERHAN'S intonation was brilliant, his tone really large and warm; and when intonation and tone were combined with spacious, big-scale phrasing, the result was often breathtakingly beautiful. I shan't easily forget the entry of the solo violin in the Concerto's first movement; it set a standard for the whole performance that was happily maintained throughout. Schneiderhan's striking masculinity and his complete self-assurance made his interpretation a notable experience. Such was the extraordinary



confidence of his technique (by no means of the virtuoso order, but supremely secure) that even the trickiest of Beethoven's many uncomfortable solo passages were skilfully covered up by the solidity of Schneiderhan's interpretative approach.

As for Kleiber's Ninth, everybody knows by now that I have been spoiled for all time by Furtwängler's interpretation—whether for better or worse depends on whether you like Furtwängler or not. There were, nevertheless, many good things in Kleiber's reading, especially in the finale. But in general *tempi* were much too fast. Even the first movement's admittedly finely articulated *coda*, the point at which I arrived, having been unavoidably delayed at a concert elsewhere, was rushed off its monumental feet; transitions misfired and many developments failed to develop. Much of the solo singing was splendid, particularly Sylvia Fisher's and Edgar Evans'; the latter's performance in the finale's *alla marcia* was highly commendable. The orchestral performance—even making allowances for the Opera House's poor acoustics when an orchestra is promoted from pit to stage—was wretchedly mediocre. If, as *The Times* informed us on 20th May, it is true that Dr. Kleiber "would like to pack [the Covent Garden Orchestra] up and take it with him wherever he goes", he must have had severe second thoughts in the scherzo's trio where the oboist made an inexcusably ruinous blunder. That kind of literally amateurish error shouldn't, or rather couldn't, occur in a first-rate orchestra on top of its form.

At Chelsea Town Hall, the Mozart preceded the Beethoven and was the slightly more successful performance, though in both concertos Mr. Wallfisch played with great distinction and outstanding musicality. Mr. Wallfisch had really re-thought the Mozart so that his conception of it was, in the best sense, an unorthodox one. There were no tricks or wilful distortions, but a fresh angle of approach; sensitive, sensible and imaginative, which revealed new methods of treating the Concerto's material as perfectly valid, even when they were in direct opposition to what tradition has taught us to expect. For instance, in the *coda* to the Mozart finale, where all is normally tension and urgency, Mr. Wallfisch achieved his kind of tension by a very subtle relaxation of both *tempo* and phrasing. He eschewed drama, was indifferent to it almost, and yet his indifference shielded a drama of its own. It was a kind of laconic expression very intimately associated with Mozart's own personality, and the deliberate under-statement made its emphatic point. This was no self-conscious seeking after a new effect, but a deeply musical realization of an alternative interpretation embedded, as it were, in the music itself. It was a near-tragedy that apart from this journal and *Music Survey*, seemingly no other music critic was present at this concert. If Mr. Wallfisch is an obviously remarkable artist he is as yet not widely known; and at this stage of his career, sad though it may be, his future engagements doubtless depend on the extent of his press notices. In these circumstances, it is a pity that *The Times*, for example, with three music critics, was evidently unable to attend. There are not so many creatively recreative pianists about that we can afford to neglect Mr. Wallfisch. If we don't hear of him again soon it won't be because the critics wrote about him but because they didn't.

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## Book Reviews

- Orlando Gibbons and His Family.* By Edmund Fellowes. Second edition. Pp. 109. (Oxford University Press.) 1951. 10s. 6d.
- Reflections on Music.* By Edwin Fischer. Pp. 47. (Williams & Norgate Ltd.) 1951. 5s.
- Catalogue of Printed Music in the British Museum. Accessions. Part 53—Music in the Hirsch Library.* Published by the Trustees of the British Museum, London, 1951.
- Mediaeval Polyphony in the Bodleian Library.* By Dom Anselm Hughes. Pp. 63. (Bodleian Library, Oxford.) 1951.
- François-Joseph Fétis, musicologue et compositeur.* Par Robert Wangermée. Pp. 355. (Académie royale de Belgique. Classe de Beaux Arts, Memoires. Tome VI, fasc. 4.) 1951.
- Les Maîtres de Chant des XVII et XVIIIe siècles à la Collégiale de SS. Michel et Gudule à Bruxelles.* Par Robert Wangermée. Pp. 310. 1950.
- Octave Maus et La Vie musicale belge (1875-1914).* Par Albert Vander Linden. Pp. 156. 1950.
- Tonarten und Stimmungen der antiken Musik.* Von Otto Gombosi. Pp. 148. (Ejnar Munksgaard, Kopenhagen.) 1939.

The volume dedicated "to the last of the Tudor school of musicians" is probably the last publication seen through the press by the late Dr. Fellowes, whose recent death put the final seal on a life-work of singular tenacity of purpose and completeness of achievement. The second edition of Fellowes' book on Gibbons (first published in 1925) contains important additions: relevant proof that Gibbons was born in Oxford and not—as earlier assumed—in Cambridge and the immediate circumstances of his death which was due—not to the plague—but to the effects of an apoplectic fit. The book goes a long way to clarify the respective merits of Orlando and his highly gifted son Christopher as well as to elucidate the growth of the Gibbons family with the aid of a family tree and a useful appendix of family documents. Most valuable are the catalogues of works (with exact indications as to the whereabouts of their manuscripts) attached to the three chapters dealing with Orlando's music, the harmonic splendour and polyphonic resourcefulness of which surely deserves a more detailed analysis than the venerable champion of Tudor Music thought fit to offer. The volume is beautifully printed and adorned with some extremely well produced illustrations.

"Reflections on Music" by a great pianist are welcome as long as they confine themselves to the pianistic issue. But there seems little reason to preserve for posterity addresses "delivered during courses on musical interpretation", in which problems of the piano are only skirted for the sake of ponderous platitudes on "Art and Life" and the like. If these addresses are further seasoned with German quotations from Goethe (to which translations in remarkably shoddy English prose are attached) and flavoured with historic trivialities on Bach, Mozart, Beethoven *e tutti quanti*, the serious reader tends to become a trifle impatient. When Edwin Fischer blandly asserts (*op. cit.*, p. 31) that "if the aftermath of war had not imposed limitations on us, it would have gone on with Symphonies of a Thousand", he only proves by this incautious remark that he must have been mentally asleep for the last forty years. For exactly in the years between 1910 and 1914 (*i.e.* the time of Mahler's "Symphony of a Thousand") Busoni's *Elegies* and Schönberg's first *Kammersinfonie*, Op. 9, were definitely breaking away from monumentalism in music, thereby heralding a new epoch of musical "Microcosmos". The table of contents indicates that Fischer's essay on Beethoven (from which the above quotation is taken) was written in 1921. It seems strange that he apparently found no reason for revising his opinion after thirty years. It seems stranger still that an artist

of his calibre consented to such a clumsy translation of his German text as the one offered anonymously in this volume. The book is poorly produced and contains some exasperating misprints.

It is a consolatory thought to know that the late Paul Hirsch lived long enough to see the first copies of this new *Catalogue of Printed Music* in the British Museum, dedicated to the bulk of the music in the Hirsch library. The volume comes as a godsend to students and scholars alike, eagerly waiting for the incorporation of the Hirsch items in the General Catalogue. By listing these items in two main groups (music printed before and after 1800) with the official pressmarks of the Hirsch library attached, it enables the reader to choose at home without having to worry the officials in the General Reading Room. For this painstaking compilation, Mr. A. Hyatt King and Mr. Charles Humphries deserve highest praise. Mr. Oldman's most informative preface yields the further gratifying information that a second "Accessions" volume is being prepared, which will contain the titles and pressmarks of the ca. 6000 books on musical subjects in the Hirsch library. The present volume, the proofs of which had been corrected by the late founder of the library, will remain a durable memento, recalling Paul Hirsch's unique achievement as a great collector and benefactor of music and transmitting the memory of his great and lovable personality to distant generations.

In his catalogue, *Mediaeval Polyphony in the Bodleian Library*, Dom Anselm Hughes has listed the musical treasures of fifty-one Oxford manuscripts which received a preliminary bibliographical treatment in Nicholson's rather inaccessible *Early Bodleian Music* exactly fifty years ago. The value of Dom Anselm's meticulous catalogue is enhanced by the fact that the conscientious compiler has enumerated in copious marginal notes any new copy or partial publication of any of these MSS. The frequent cross-references to more recent re-publications in the *Denkmäler* or *Études historiques* series make fascinating reading.

Robert Wangermée, a pupil of Charles van den Borren and a member of the Free University of Brussels, offers two volumes of patient research and industrious bibliographical zeal, devoted to the lesser known chapters of Franco-Belgian music and issued here as part of the publications of the Royal Belgian Academy. The older volume (of 1943) describes the life and works of local masters of the later Baroque in Belgium and Flanders, such as Van der Horst, Jean Tidou, H. Piersot, Antoine Lescolier, Pierre and Heracle Bréhy and the two Van Helmont brothers with the help of interesting illustrations, facsimiles, documents and copious thematic catalogues. The more recent book is dedicated to a biography and general assessment of Fétis, the great lexicographer and musical scholar whose estimation at the hands of posterity has suffered so many ups and downs. Wangermée's valuable study will do much to restore the balance in Fétis' favour and to revive the interest in one of the most versatile critical minds in the musical life of the mid-nineteenth century. A whole chapter is devoted to Fétis' quite forgotten achievements as a composer. His ambitious plan for a General Anthology of music (reprinted *op. cit.*, p. 325 ff.) proves the wide ambit of his interests. Wangermée's book, the first large-scale study of the French musicologist, fills a noticeable gap in musicography and deserves to be read widely and also to be translated into English and German.

To the same series of publications by the Belgian Royal Academy belongs Vander Linden's study of the eminent journalist, organizer and writer Octave Maus (1856-1919) who played a distinguished part in Belgian life and art, music and letters. The student of Franco-Belgian music will be especially attracted by the appendix to the little volume, containing a collection of fifty-five letters by Vincent d'Indy to Octave Maus, written in connection with the latter's various journalistic enterprises and concert organizations. Vander Linden's study with its collection of letters and documents should be of great assistance to anybody interested in the trends and cross-currents of musical life in France and Belgian Flanders prior to 1914.

Gombosi's study of the music of ancient Greece, of its scale system and its transpositions of scales, the pitch and performing practice of its melodies, its musical notation



and of the place of music in the systems of Greek philosophers, is the work of a distinguished Hungarian scholar—a one-time pupil of Johannes Wolf, to whom the volume is dedicated. Its publication in German by a Danish publisher was all but engulfed in the maelstrom of the recent war. As recent publications show, Gombosi's book has so far failed to catch the attention of scholars interested in its problems. It should be thoroughly studied by an expert and judged on its merits. The volume is full of real erudition and a substantial contribution to a deeper understanding of the scattered remnants of ancient Greek music. But it is certainly not for the undersigned to decide if and how far it adds to the picture conjured up so eloquently by Curt Sachs in his manifold writings on the tantalizing subject of ancient Greek music.

H. F. R.

*The Music of Gustav Holst.* By Imogen Holst. Pp. 164. (Oxford University Press.) 1951. 15s.

Filial piety of a very unusual kind informs this book, for it is not founded upon the uncritical admiration of a daughter for her father's music, but upon direct merciless questioning unerringly calculated to bring to light all its weaknesses as well as all its strengths. But it is an attitude Holst himself would have welcomed, and, indeed, one often feels that his daughter's words might be the objectification of Holst's own criticisms upon his work. The bright critical light brought to bear upon all the important works does, however, tend to give the reader not deeply versed in the music a sort of catalogue of failures, semi-failures and successes, without giving compensatory glimpses of the unifying principles that I believe were always there. Holst's tragedy—if one can use such a strong term—was that his long path to maturity was immoderately lengthened by yielding to the attractions that a naturally adventurous mind found in all the cross-currents in twentieth-century music: but it is a mistake to think that Holst's apparent changes of direction were a sign of musical instability, or of an effort to find his own centre in some movement or "ism" outside himself. Rather are they, to my mind, signs of a search for an ideal *vehicle* for his singularly consistent musical thought, for the essential Holst is recognisable (and in this respect he is like Stravinsky) whatever musical garb he adopts. Thus, although I think that Miss Holst's critical acumen is sound and extremely penetrating, and although I agree with most of her conclusions about an individual work, her study is in a sense only a beginning inasmuch as the details are not co-ordinated into a single canvas.

In describing Holst's music—and descriptive words, however appropriate they seem, always tend to distort the truth where music is concerned—Miss Holst uses most often the words "aloof", "remote", "austere", "cold". Now these words are definite in the impact they leave on the reader's mind, and I very much question their essential validity as descriptions of much of Holst's music. The "austerity" is really an economy of language, the "coldness" a discarding of conventional romantic phraseology, the "remoteness" the result of, as it were, scooping out the inside of a harmony and leaving its essential framework, the "aloofness" a restraint in assuming any sort of traditional emotional attitude. All these things are, however, subservient to the aural impact of the music, and for me the aural excitements of Holst's late and comparatively sober-looking works are far greater than those of the more obviously exciting *Planets* and cannot, I feel, be summed up by any of the above-used adjectives. The *Ode on a Grecian Urn*, for instance, may be a "cold pastoral" in its lack of technical exhibitionism and in its avoidance of the obviously sensuous, but it has a passion that is all the more touching because of its timelessness.

Faced with the fineness of this book, my criticisms may appear somewhat querulous. But they are only a plea for wider perspectives. The example of Holst has been such a potent influence in my own life that I feel I cannot let any occasion pass without witnessing to his singleness of purpose, *through whatever mode it was expressed*.

An appendix contains a full list of works, with dates and publishers, and a chronological list of the main events in Holst's creative life.

E. R.



## ON CONDUCTING

*The Conductor and His Baton.* By Nicolai Malko. Pp. xiv + 280. (Wilhelm Hansen, Copenhagen; Novello, London.) 1950. 27s. 6d.

Serious observers will agree that the art of conducting is declining. In the inter-war years the conductor with a flawless technique and convincing musicianship was not a rare bird as he is to-day: almost anywhere on the continent men in charge of symphony orchestras or opera personnel could be relied upon to produce a satisfactory and even convincing performance, often differing but little from the results obtained by outstanding conductors. To-day, although Bruno Walter, Toscanini, Kleiber and a few others are fortunately still with us, the accomplishments of the new generation are far from satisfactory. True, "adequate" performances are not rarely achieved by any conductor who endeavours to discharge his duties conscientiously; yet their technical equipment is often inadequate. This is confirmed by the dull performances of old-established works and the discouraging presentations of new music which are so often encountered in the concert-room and in the opera house.

The reason is not far to seek: scores of opera houses in the Germany of the inter-war years, for example, provided enviable opportunities for the young conductor to gain first-hand experience from the day-to-day eventualities and emergencies which arise both in the rehearsal-rooms and in the orchestra-pit during the evening at any musical theatre. For it is practical experience that counts here more than in any other department of music, and this is acquired more readily in an opera house which is concerned with the most complex form of musical art, and which functions—or is supposed to in normal circumstances—for at least six days a week, than in connection with a symphony orchestra which is mainly concerned with instrumental music and is usually required to perform much less frequently.

This will also explain the dearth of conductors with more than average capability in this country: not until the end of the last war did an opera house come to be established, and although conditions are as yet far from ideal in many respects, Covent Garden stands for a permanent institution. That in spite of such unfavourable circumstances this country could muster a few outstanding conductors is truly amazing; equally amazing is the indifference shown towards them, often amounting to sheer neglect. Distinguished conductors are obliged to accept positions which are obviously inadequate to their extraordinary qualities.

Significantly, the general decline is attested also in the increasing quantity of books devoted to conducting, especially to its technical side. It has often been said that the decline of a culture and the decay of a craft are first indicated by the spate of *apologia*, exegeses, explanations, and whatnot of the subject in question: lost battles are vindicated in post-factum memoirs. Thus the authoritative nineteenth-century books on conducting, e.g. Deldevez' *L'art du chef d'orchestre* (1878), Berlioz' *Le chef d'orchestre* (1856), Wagner's *Über das Dirigieren* (1870), Weingartner's *Über das Dirigieren* (1896), were still considered adequate during the opening years of the twentieth: during the first few years few additions were made to the literature; the fifteen years from the beginning of the thirties until the end of the last war saw the appearance of about half-a-dozen, while in the comparatively short post-1945 period about the same number have been published. Apart from general points and a few practical hints, the earlier books dealt with questions which would now be considered to belong properly to treatises on orchestration or aesthetics: the aspiring future director of the orchestra was expected—and was able—to learn a good deal by attending concerts, etc., which were rarely in the hands of technically incompetent conductors. In fact the appearance of Scherchen's book (*Lehrbuch des Dirigierens*, 1929) caused quite a stir in discussing certain aspects of conducting which were believed a prerequisite of anyone considering to become a conductor, although the section in which these points are discussed is comparatively short. Alfred Szendrei's *Dirigierkunde* (1932) followed largely the same plan, and included a section discussing problems created by broadcasting. Von Waltershausen's little-known book (*Dirigenten-Erziehung*, 1929)

has the incomparable merit of treating the subject from the would-be operatic conductor's point of view: hence it is unsurpassed even in our day.

In contrast to these, most of the recent books on conducting devote their pages almost exclusively to manual technique: an exception is Inghelbrecht's witty *Le chef d'orchestre et son équipe* (1949), not unlike in spirit to Sir Henry Wood's stimulating notes; Lualdi's *L'arte di dirigere l'orchestra* (1940) and Previtali's *Guida allo studio della direzione d'orchestra* (1951) have not reached this country so far. Of recent English publications Max Rudolf's *The Grammar of Conducting* (1950) is equipped with elaborate charts and detailed analyses of beats: the author is apparently a conscientious and painstaking musician if nothing is known, at least to this reviewer, of his practical experience. The author of the volume under review, Mr. Malko, in common with Inghelbrecht, Lualdi, and Previtali, is a conductor of international reputation, and his views consequently command attention.

What makes a good conductor? Impeccable technique, an altogether high degree of musical intelligence, and above all a quality which could be best described as suggestive personality. The last requirement is something which cannot be acquired by study or practice: one either has it in oneself to impose one's experience of a particular musical work of art on a group of musicians of varying musical upbringing and outlook commonly called an orchestra, and inspire them to realize one's conception of it, or one has not; this capacity cannot be offset by any amount of technique. The gift of an easy and free wrist is also a blessing which no amount of practice will provide. As to the second desideratum, i.e. musical intelligence, this is, in this case, of a particular kind: a great deal of it is acquired and therefore teachable, yet to a considerable extent it depends on intuition. A composer's musical intelligence is measured by his particular constructive ability understood in its widest sense; he may create excellent music without, for instance, the slightest understanding of historical processes. The test of the conductor's intelligence is his comprehension of structural details and his correct appreciation of certain stylistic principles; this latter is often the outcome of practical experience. Manual technique, in any case its fundamentals, may be acquired to a great extent by instruction; yet, as Mr. Malko points out in the opening pages of his book, "it is impossible to acquire the technique of conducting just by reading a book". He goes on to emphasize the value of personal experience, obviously meaning the value of "trying oneself out"; but here we might add the invaluable gain derived from another kind of "personal experience", i.e. that of playing in an orchestra: it will be remembered that the best conductors mostly did so for a shorter or longer period, usually at the beginning of their careers.

Mr. Malko's book is devoted exclusively to the technical side of conducting, though in conclusion he points out that it should be regarded as part of a more comprehensive plan. Of its six chapters the two longest deal with problems of the beat and the gesture respectively. In the opening chapter Mr. Malko makes some general remarks concerning the musical equipment of the would-be conductor, though he fails to emphasize that at least passable piano-playing is an essential requisite. He deals at some length with the question of the conductor and his relationship to his "instrument"; he condemns the practice of putting a student-conductor in charge of a student orchestra as is so often done in the various colleges. Though some would doubt his reasoning, practice seems to bear him out. *From the conductor's point of view*, the orchestra is an instrument. As such, the student may reasonably expect it to be as perfect as possible when he endeavours to put the fruits of his preliminary studies to practical test. For his conducting should be understood as a test of the correctness, or otherwise, of his manual technique, subsidiary gestures, etc., but not as a test of the orchestra. In fact, a good orchestra will, in this case, play as the conductor conducts, warts and all (which, with some conductors, might lead to unexpected results in the concert room) and a faulty beat ought to produce a correspondingly faulty execution, without the orchestra endeavouring to "cover it up" instinctively; likewise a good gesture a good response. And this is no mean feat on the orchestra's part, strange as it may seem. A student orchestra's bad playing is, as a rule, independent of the inexpert direction of the student conductor, who should not, even if he could, waste his time correcting elementary faults of individual instrumental playing.

An interesting feature of the book is a chapter devoted to physical training, which has been neglected by previous writers. This is very thoroughly done and is accompanied by illustrations. In a concluding chapter he summarizes the most important points of his arguments. The remaining chapters deal with manual technique proper. In the first of these Mr. Malko analyses the various aspects of the beat, its preparation, its "reflex," etc., before proceeding to describe the various rhythmic schemes, *i.e.* one to twelve beats in a bar, unusual combinations, succession of differing structures, and transition from one type to another. These are accompanied by familiar sketch-diagrams, and by copious and excellent music examples which range from Haydn to Bartók. He emphasizes the importance of a clear beat, especially in complex bars. This seems to be self-evident, but, Mr. Malko warns us, in practice the rhythmic complexity of a passage is often aggravated by the obscure indications of the conductor. Surprisingly Mr. Malko makes no remark upon the question of beat-subdivision, a constant dilemma of the inexperienced conductor.

The most valuable chapter of the book is that dealing with the conductor's gestures. The indication of rests is discussed at some length and considerable attention is given to the preparatory beat: its importance cannot be too strongly insisted upon. In fact, it has often been said that the secret of conducting lies in a good preparatory beat: if care is taken of this the subsequent beats will take care of themselves. Mr. Malko quotes the five famous passages which are approached with apprehension by almost every conductor, *viz.* the openings of the *Magic Flute* overture, the first and last movements of Beethoven's second Symphony, the last movement of Schubert's ninth Symphony in C, and the *Barber* overture. With all respect to Mr. Malko's sensible suggestions, we suggest that no hard and fast rules could be laid down here. The Mozart and Rossini passages, for example, could be started by divided preparatory beats, but there have been instances where this was not done. One simply must have the knack: this is where a born conductor is disclosed. Another problem of vital importance is the handling of *fermatas*. One would have profited from his suggestions concerning the well-known examples in the *Entführung* overture and in the last movement of the *Eroica*. Another tricky instance which is regrettably omitted is that occurring in Elgar's *Cockaigne*: here Mr. Malko's advice would have been especially valued since the passage in question is perhaps the most perplexing in the whole orchestral literature.

One would also have welcomed a substantial chapter devoted exclusively to the various intricate problems of conducting opera: this is a specialized department which, paradoxically, includes all aspects of a conductor's technique and function. The book makes one expect the promised complementary volume, *The Fundamentals of the Art of Conducting*, with eager anticipation.

J. S. W.

#### EUGENE GOOSSENS' AUTOBIOGRAPHY

*Overture and Beginners.* By Eugene Goossens. Pp. viii + 327. (Methuen.) 1951. 18s.

Mr. Eugene Goossens has set out to tell the fortunes of his family and himself in particular. The chronicle starts with his greatgrandfather's birth in 1793 at Bruges, and the present instalment ends in 1931 with a music festival at Oxford and three short chapters on London personalities of the 1920s. There are five appendices, including casts of operas produced by the composer while associated with the Carl Rosa Company, like his father before him, a list of his compositions and press comments on his departure from America's Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra. His book is pleasantly and modestly written and up to the American saga of success really diverting; but this is the case with so many musical and theatrical autobiographies; a reader prefers to dwell on the early struggles and take the ultimate triumphs for granted. An honest persevering mind emerges together with an assurance and *sangfroid* almost as remarkable as Spohr's. Here is no parental debunking à la *Gerald* or *Right Hand Left Hand*, but a genuine pride in the author's family's achievements, often curiously interlinked with his own, as when (p. 110, n.) he records how the silver cigarette-case given to him by Ethel Smyth after he

conducted *The Boson's Mate* deflected a machine-gun bullet which would otherwise have pierced the heart of his brother Leon, to whom he had lent it in 1917. The sketches of Liverpool and the Cromwell Road stand out with the drabness, but not the sordidness, of one of Mr. Patrick Hamilton's novels, and the *soirées d'orchestre* are described with the gusto of an enthusiastic boy. Of the *portraits*, that of Debussy conducting, of Rivarde, the violinist, fishing, of Delius, Diaghilev, Chaliapine (with "the pathetic, wan little Nijinsky") and of Elgar turning to the orchestration of a Bach organ fugue after his wife's death really illuminate the narrative prose and will not readily be forgotten. Very few things pulled me up. On p. 112 *The Lark Ascending*, dedicated to Marie Hall by Vaughan Williams, is stated to be "still in manuscript"; it may have been when those words were written, but surely it is printed now. On p. 22 "Boom" (*La Grande Duchesse*) should be Boum and on p. 49 "Viotto" should be Viotti. On a page I cannot recapture when the family comes to Camden Town they are stated to occupy a house next to that of "the Crippen murder", and the date of the murder is given as 1903. Whether Hilldrop Crescent is considered I do not know, but the murder of "Belle Elmore" took place some years later.

The publication of this book is as notable as its author's first performance of *Le Sacre du Printemps*.

*The Heritage of Music*, Vol. III. Edited by Hubert J. Foss. Pp. iv + 191. (Oxford University Press). 1951. 10s. 6d.

This third volume is well up to the standard of its predecessors, the eleven essays being competent and interestingly written. The spot one is Dent's study of Rossini, with its learned *excursus* on the three types of opera, its alignment of "*Di tanti palpiti*" to airs in Paisiello's comic operas and its plea for a rehearing of *William Tell*. But one or two of the others run it very close; I would specify particularly Wilfrid Mellers' study of Lully and Martin Cooper's of Bizet. I should rather have looked for Winton Dean, whose study of *Carmen* should be on every opera-lover's shelves, on the latter, but he has been chosen for Puccini, and a very readable survey of the operas and their shortcomings he gives, making, by the way, a valuable definition of sentimentality, "insufficiently motivated sentiment", in the process. Professor Westrup's on Monteverdi is sound Oxford academicism and Dr. Armstrong's on Gibbons contains a criticism of the *Tudor Church Music* essay on Gibbons that to some may be disconcerting. Philip Radcliffe deals with Corelli and Vivaldi, the Editor (shortly) with Grieg, Richard Gorer with Smetana and Dvořák, more affectionately with the former, finding the latter "essentially a miniaturist", and showing no sense of the melodic sweep of e.g. the opening subject of Dvořák's piano Quintet. Alan Frank closes the book with Bartók. Comic relief is afforded by Frank Howes' essay on the Edwardian master Elgar, which contains the most ingenuous statement of the English attitude to art and artists I ever saw, making this contribution *echt* Festival. He tells us that Mozart and Beethoven wore themselves out, but Elgar was a late starter and an early finisher, whose creative faculty was dependent on his wife, who made him a great composer: "for consider: she was the daughter of Major-General Sir Henry G. Roberts and she married a man beneath her in social station, as the social custom of the late nineteenth century reckoned such things". Later, with regard to Elgar's projected opera, he writes, "There was no Lady Elgar to keep him up to it". O, sweet England! Elgarity indeed! This "major-general" *aperçu* is almost as *impayable* as a certain chorus in *The Pirates of Penzance*.

#### GOUNOD TO ROUSSEL

*French Music from the death of Berlioz to the death of Fauré*. By Martin Cooper. Pp. x + 240. (Oxford University Press.) 1951. 21s.

This must have been a terribly hard book to write and Mr. Cooper is to be congratulated on a thoroughly readable and balanced achievement. It is fearless, independent, and has not been submitted to French criticism. In a disarming introduction the author

shows his complete awareness of what French music is and what it is not. It does not, he tells us, primarily cater for the soul but for the intelligence and the senses, and it distrusts the "sublime". Nevertheless, the Franco-Prussian War and the musical supremacy of Wagner, diffused by *littérateurs* and one great poet (Baudelaire), to say nothing of the organ-minded César Franck and Vincent d'Indy's Schola Cantorum that Port-Royalized Franck's message, have coloured the whole of this period and made even the rebels and the reactionaries self-conscious to a Wagnerian degree. With these fifty-five years, bristling with wars and shifting ideologies, Mr. Cooper has dealt as a musical annalist, not in *blocks* of composers, and it is surprising how lucid the story grows under his touch. The end-tables, in which Mr. Edward Sackville-West has assisted, epitomize the cultural record adequately, the period including the birth and death of one great stylist, Proust (1871-1922), the rise to fame and deaths of van Gogh, Gauguin, Toulouse-Lautrec, Cézanne and Degas, to speak of French painters only, and the *flourerunt* of Whistler, Verlaine, Rimbaud and Wilde. The Russian Ballet has also to be added to the disruptive and creative influences and, with it, the achievement of Stravinsky. A mixed grill indeed, with Saint-Saëns dying in 1921, the year of Valéry's *La Soirée avec M. Teste*, Valéry's father-in-law Mallarmé having died in 1898, the year of Ravel's *Sites auriculaires*.

Mr. Cooper is scrupulously fair to Gounod, whose *Sapho* Berlioz found too "fierce" just a hundred years ago, and whose ideal, in 1910, Saint-Saëns defined as "expressiveness". He notes that *Faust* did for Gounod what *In Memoriam* did for Tennyson, i.e. made him pour "naturally lyric gifts into epic moulds"; he also does justice to the musicianship and design of Saint-Saëns, deriving the idiom of Massenet, Franck and Fauré from the Gounod tradition and that of Chabrier, Dukas and Ravel from that of Saint-Saëns. As an example of his felicity in *placing* composers, observe that he characterizes Alkan as "a nineteenth-century Busoni" and, for his scrupulous fairness to smaller figures, his accounts of Alexis de Castillon, Lekeu and Messager.

To anyone who regards Berlioz as the modern French musician *par excellence* it is not difficult to find the distinctive *raffinement* of Debussy in *him*, despite his great canvases, rather than in the more obvious Moussorgsky, whom, as Mr. Cooper notes, Debussy studied. The veritable source of *L'Après-midi d'un Faune* and much also of its composer's Whistlerian impressions is a song like "*Villanelle*", in *Les Nuits d'Été*, and the *parlante* periods in *Pelléas* surely hark back to things like *Faust* walking about Marguerite's chamber in the *Damnation*, if, indeed, the recitative passage preceding the *arioso dolente* of Beethoven's op. 110 be not behind both these displays, spiritually, and much in *Boris Godounov* as well. There must still be many in this country who recall the disgracefully inadequate "great war" obituary notice of Debussy in *The Times* (no less, *par parenthèse*, than that of Reger), a proof of how little the true French spirit appeals to the English mind. There is nothing of this barbarism in Mr. Cooper's estimate of Debussy, and, reading between the lines, one is perhaps justified in finding an implied stricture on the facile and popular Ravel, who, if truth be told, is of the house of Massenet for all his scholarship and eclecticism.

Wagner seems to have led the French on a completely wrong scent, Bizet excepted, with whom the author deals more fully in *The Heritage of Music* (reviewed above). After Wagner's death it was impossible, as one can see from the score of *Pelléas*, to ignore him without being conscious of him all the time. I have even heard *Pelléas* called "*Tristan*, with pseudo-childhood taking the place of pseudo-Buddhism", and not wholly unjustly either. *A fortiori* what can be said of d'Indy and his school who, not being artists of Debussy's calibre, however conscientiously intellectual, wrote operas deliberately aware of Wagner, yet endeavouring to produce "national" art? The essential greatness of Debussy can never be burked or obscured.

On Satie (rightly granted his pioneering due), Bruneau, Chabrier, Roussel (who ends the tale as an impressionist nursed in the Schola Cantorum) and *Les Six*, with their apologist Cocteau, the judgment of the author is admirable; he sees the *chic* Parisienne in Germaine Taillefer and (though I say this, not he) the Noël Cowardlike talent of



Poulenc. In sum, I can think of no single book dealing with an artistic period of which this reminds me so much as the late Professor Harold Butler's *Post-Augustan Poetry* that I read in my undergraduate years; and, of course, in *this* galley Fauré is *Statius aut nullus*.

E. H. W. M.

*The World's Encyclopaedia of Recorded Music.* By Francis F. Clough and G. J. Cuming. Pp. xvi + 890. (Sidgwick & Jackson in association with The Decca Record Co.) 1952. £5 5s.

The gramophone has long been despised by musicians and, in this country, still is by some. This unfortunate state of affairs is attributable in part to prejudice—one of the most prevalent and obstinate of the vices of the tribe—and in part to the average musician's ignorance of modern developments in the manufacture and reproduction of gramophone records. A trained ear can still detect a difference between the sound of a "live" performance and that of the best record played on the finest equipment under the most advantageous conditions; but in recent years the gap has become very narrow—just how narrow the writer would be delighted to demonstrate to anyone interested.

This is by no means the concern of Messrs. Clough and Cuming, although the conviction that the gramophone would continue to make progress as a more and more valuable adjunct of modern life may have sustained them from time to time during the more wearying spells of their prodigious labours. Clough and Cuming have produced a volume which, like Einstein's revision of *Köchel*, Deutsch's Schubert catalogue, Schmieder's Bach catalogue and Loewenberg's *Annals of Opera*, is indispensable to everyone who is at all seriously involved with the wider aspects of the subject of music: while the gramophone enthusiast, whether he has other interests or not, will have to buy it if he takes himself seriously.

This *Encyclopaedia* covers twenty-five years of electrically recorded 78s and about two years of the LP. (Here the English reader should bear in mind that long-playing records were issued in the United States some time before Decca's first English list appeared in June, 1950; it therefore follows that this book is not fully up-to-date. It isn't. The sheer size of the undertaking eliminates any such possibility, but the authors intend to issue supplements from time to time which, it is to be hoped, will keep the work comprehensive to within about twelve months of current releases.)

The most important feature of the volume is its universality. Clough and Cuming have done their best to list, for example, every electrically recorded version of the *Eroica* Symphony: regardless of present availability, personal preferences, country of origin, technical quality or any of the other factors so often invoked by lesser men to camouflage the distortions of their imperfect perspectives. In this case twenty-three versions are catalogued, whereas Sackville-West and Shawe-Taylor in their *Record Guide* mention three.

The *World's Encyclopaedia* cannot be reviewed; it can only be recommended. The typography, which must have presented many awkward problems, is clear and methodical, though old-fashioned and reminiscent of school text-books. The paper is thick and the volume consequently bulky; the binding fairly durable but dull. The work is well worth five guineas, but it could have been much more attractively produced.

G. N. S.



## Reviews of Music

### TWO STRAVINSKY MASTERPIECES

*Oedipus Rex*. Opéra-Oratorio en deux Actes d'après Sophocle, par I. Stravinsky et J. Cocteau. Réduction pour chant et piano par l'auteur. New Version 1948. (Boosey & Hawkes, New York.) 1949.

*Perséphone*. Mélodrame en Trois Tableaux d'André Gide, Musique d'Igor Stravinsky. Pour ténor, chœur mixte et orchestre. Partition d'Orchestre, Révisée 1949. (Boosey & Hawkes, New York.) 1950.

These works belong to Stravinsky's most important creative period and their publication is an occasion for a survey. To assess their significance in relation to the stylistic considerations and aesthetic conceptions of the times which produced them, and in relation to his own works belonging to the same period, a definition of the term "musical neo-classicism" is called for. For convenience's sake let us accept the descriptions contained in both the *Harvard Dictionary* and Slonimsky's *Music Since 1900*. We are told that neo-classicism "is essentially a return to eighteenth-century simplicity, a reaction against . . . the nineteenth century. In melody, it differs from the classics in that neo-classicism makes use of larger intervals in a larger melodic compass; in harmony, it makes use of a pan-diatonic extension of tonality. Contrary motion and sustaining tone replace the parallel harmonies of impressionism. In rhythm, neo-classicism preserves eighteenth-century simplicity, but favours unsymmetric bar periods. In orchestration, it cultivates the harsher instruments of the orchestral *palette*, in opposition to pictorial instrumentation"; and it is "a movement . . . which is characterized by the inclusion in contemporary style of features derived from the music of the Bach-era and of still earlier periods. It represents the . . . reaction against the unrestrained emotionalism of the late romanticism. Particularly distinct is the influence of Bach which makes itself felt in the emphasis on contrapuntal texture; in the revival of early forms . . . in the reduction of orchestral resources and colours; in the abandoning of programme music; and in a general tendency towards an objective and detached style".

But this is only one aspect of neo-classicism. The word itself with its prefix suggests a revival of a particular artistic and aesthetic attitude. Consequently the movement should be considered in its historical perspective, *i.e.* in reference to the style period which preceded it and to the intellectual influences which contributed to its development; in this way the conditions of its origin may explain its particular features of technique: in appreciating both the motivating forces and the constructional peculiarities we shall arrive at a better understanding of its significance.

Thus the concept appears to denote a synthesis; it implies an evolutionary process which, appropriating certain stylistic innovations of the preceding "revolutionary" period, has brought them into ordered relationship with other structural elements. In revolutionary periods (musically speaking) some factors receive exclusive attention, often out of proportion to their importance: Stravinsky's works of the first decade of this century will be remembered in this connection. Preoccupation with harmonic reforms and experiments characterized much of the music written at the turn of the century, and this applies equally to the impressionist and expressionist movements. But harmonic extravagance and originality at any price having over-reached themselves, a reaction has set in: the relative importance of harmony, merely one single factor among a number of structural components, was increasingly recognized, which was shown in the tendency to accommodate the recently conquered territories of harmonic expression with horizontal elements (line and rhythm), and "spatial" elements, *viz.* form. Since harmony ceased to be all-important in the musical discourse, its arbitrary treatment and complexities were not any longer judged solely by their assumed emotional significance. The new attitude has obviously called for a systematization, often amounting to conventionalization, of harmonic resources:

in the process of gradually becoming subordinated to the exigencies of contrapuntal polyphony some of the more extreme chord-formations were considerably simplified or slowly superseded. But the reaction went further: in the early decades of the present century the conception of "pure counterpoint" was invented in an endeavour to neutralize the harmonic surfeit with an exclusive concern for linear treatment where, as could be expected, the pendulum swung in the other direction: harmonic and tonal decencies were almost entirely disregarded. Typical products of the times were the music of New Objectivity and the *Gebrauchsmusik*, often and incorrectly labelled neo-classicism without regard for their pre-neo-classic significance. The course of this development was much the same as in the case of the harmonic period; eventually an equilibrium was attained between vertical and horizontal considerations, leading almost automatically to satisfactory solutions of formal problems. This intellectual relationship between classicism and neo-classicism, manifested in the principles of restraint and balance, in which the corresponding relationship of component parts to the whole is consistently proportional to their structural and expressive function, is believed to be more essential than details of technique.

In the light of these considerations classicism will be regarded as a recurring phase in the development of art: a principle of concentration alternating with forces of disruption, of emancipation. The evolution of a particular style will therefore always include a classical stage, and the historic periods themselves reveal a classical moment at a point of their development, or in the work of a particular artist even if the general tendency of the period in question deviates from classical ideals. Palestrina, Bach, Mozart were classic masters of classical epochs; and Mendelssohn was a classic of the Romantic movement. In addition we may often encounter a phase of classicism in the music of a particular composer: perhaps the most convincing example is found in Bartók's evolution, showing quite clearly the dialectical process described above.

In Stravinsky's otherwise arbitrary changes of style, there is one consistent and fairly easily discernible principle: it is his attachment to discipline, his particular manifestation of classicism. The harmonic brilliance and rhythmic debauch of his ballet period were relieved by the relatively austere style of works like *L'histoire du soldat* and *Les Noces*, in which he rather abruptly renounced colour and dimension; he then applied himself to explore the possibilities of linear construction (*Concerto for piano and wind instruments*). From here it was but a step to reduce the instrumental apparatus to the extent of eliminating all heterogeneous colour. In his sustained concern with horizontal values he reduced even the unavoidable minimum of harmonic background into figuration or decorative *formulae* in order that nothing should impede the directness of linear progression. The solo instrument, or possibly a small combination of homogeneous instruments were, respectively, the most expedient *media* for these propositions. Although Stravinsky did not reject the colouristic implications of its instrumental combination we may accept the Octet as an example of the latter solution in regard to its conspicuous purity of horizontal treatment. *Concertino* for string Quartet on the other hand, though set for a monochromatic instrumental *ensemble*, lacks the desired cleanness of linear texture. The works for piano alone, Sonata, and *Sérénade en La*, are the most characteristic among Stravinsky's neo-classic works which precede *Oedipus Rex*. In respect of their technical and formal discipline they foreshadow the essential qualities of the outstanding masterpieces of this period. What was needed was a commensurate spiritual experience to suffuse his music with that feeling of inner conviction which is invariably evident in works of art that withstand the changes of fashions. This he found in God, Nature, and Man. *Symphonie de Psalmes*, the musical expression of his awareness of God, does not concern us here; *Oedipus Rex*, Stravinsky's interpretation of the Destiny of Man, is chronologically the first among the three most accomplished works Stravinsky has written so far. The tragedy, symbolizing the struggle of Man against, and his defeat by inexorable Fate, has never lost its actuality. In transcending characters and types its significance is eternal; its unrelenting logic, its pitiless severity suited the particular character of Stravinsky's neo-classic style admirably. In designing the score, his intention was to allow the music to follow its own law of construction and development; which indeed corresponded not only with his sense of discipline,

but also with the objective character of his neo-classic style. Thus he rejected, on the grounds of personal inclination and stylistic expediency, the technique of musico-dramatic continuity which is usually dependent on the spoken word, and adopted the "operatic" solution where the essential situations of the drama are expressed—if this word is permitted in view of the objective character of the style—in isolated musical forms. The narrative element is thus completely excluded from the music and entrusted to a narrator who explains the incidents between the various sections. This ingenious device was adopted later by Petrassi in his ballet *La Follia di Orlando*, where the main events are expressed in dance, and the narrative relegated to a singing part. To make the division between the "dramatically active" sections and the connecting narrative absolutely unmistakable the interlocutor appears in modern evening dress, and delivers his lines in speaking voice: doubtless because resorting to *recitativo secco* for instance would establish a link, however slender, with music and disturb the clear-cut separation of narrative description from musical rendering; in addition the evening dress emphasizes the distinction of the narrator from the characters of the drama who are dressed in classical Greek robes and masks. The Latin text and the statuesque immobility of the characters prevent any arbitrary interpretation.

Corresponding to the monumental sublimity of the drama, the music impresses by its granite-like consistency and by its relentlessly stark character. The dark colours of the male voice chorus—there is but one single female part in the work—emphasize considerably the menacing sense of tragedy which is felt in the whole work. Stravinsky treats the choral passages syllabically throughout, and almost always homophonically. The three exceptions are: the closing passage of act I (three bars after fig. 90, "*Laudamus*") where a decorative motif is treated imitatively; a section in the epilogue (fig. 192–196), a fugued beginning with an irregular answer; and the choral interpolation in Jocasta's monologue (act II, fig. 114, "*in trivio mortuus*"). In the latter a variant of a theme announced by Jocasta is developed in canonic imitation which suggests the ominous word "trivium" turning round and round in Oedipus' head, who at first scarcely understands its significance until its distressing portent begins to dawn on him. The subsequent entry of the chorus is again homophonic; its detached rhythmic ejaculations, related to the insistent triplet of the opening, recall the almost forgotten deed to the anguished king's mind: he becomes aware of his doom. The passage would repay closer study as an example of psychological insight interrelated with artistic expression.

**Ex. 1 114 Oedipus Rex**



The shape of the melodic line suggests congenially the nebulous convulsions of memory in Oedipus' tortured mind: compare its effect with that of the menacing unison of B flats in the subsequent interjection, when he comprehends at last the motivating cause of his forebodings. The passage is also typical of Stravinsky's melodic construction. That it is not a chance inspiration, appearing in one single instance as an isolated case is confirmed by the occurrence of analogous phrases, variants in a great number of compositions belonging to this period, ranging from the Octet to the recent *Rake's Progress*.

In (a) and (b) of Ex. 2 the dynamic energy of the wide skips appears in natural spontaneity; in the subsequent variants this energy is carefully disciplined by integrating the wide skips into less conspicuous steps. The impulsiveness of adolescence yields to the controlled craftsmanship of maturity.

**Ex. 2**

**[5] Oetnor**  
a *(Tpt.)*  
*Sérénade en La: Cadenza finala*  
*(R.H. only given here)*  
etc.

**[155] The Rake's Progress: Act I**  
d *(Tom):* He kneels be-fore thy wounded shade.  
etc.

**[139] Ibid: Act III**  
e *(Ann):* I go to him, I go,  
etc.

**[139] Ibid: Act III**  
e *(Ann):* I go to him, I go,  
etc.

The horizontal element, of course, is of paramount importance in the neo-classic style. The *arias* of *Oedipus Rex* show a variety of melodic types, classifiable roughly in two categories which, borrowing a grammatical term, in this context I propose to call transitive and intransitive. Oedipus' manner is intransitive because his melody is not referred to another object, or to an event; it conveys the character to which it is allotted and nothing else. It is a static, self-centred, emblematic type, usually decorative, befitting the solemn stature of a king. In this case the melodic shape displays a remarkable relationship to the ornate patterns of Byzantine chant.

**Ex. 3** *Oedipus Rex*  
*dolce ma ben articolato*

**[18]**  
(Oed): Li - - be-ri, - vos li - - be-ra-bo. etc.

The designation transitive melody is applied to that type whose content is referred to an external character or event. Such melody is propulsive, dynamic and gesticulative, as shown in Creon's entry, act I, opening with

**Ex. 4**  
**[27] Oedipus Rex**

*(Creon):* Ré-spon-dit de-us: Lai - - um u - Ikis-ki,  
etc.

in passages of Tiresias' part;

**Ex. 5**  
**[76] Ibid.**

*(Tiresias):* in - ter vos pe - remp - tor est  
etc.

they are almost always based on a characteristic rhythmic pattern which accounts for their driving force.

Considering that the fundamental technical procedures and stylistic features of *Perséphone* do not differ greatly from those of *Oedipus Rex*, one is surprised to find that

*Perséphone* is pervaded by an altogether different feeling. This should be ascribed chiefly to the subject matter: the *mélodrame* deals with the myth of seasonal changes, with the departure and return of Spring, based on the Homeric allegory of the abduction of Perséphone by Pluto to his dark domain of afflicted shadows, and her radiant ascent to the daylight on Earth. Gide's luminous verses in French must have also contributed to its inspiring grace and charm, and Stravinsky was demonstrably stimulated by the suggestive qualities of the language itself.

Comparing the two stage works we are immediately impressed by the inviting atmosphere, the human warmth and captivating fragrance which emanate from *Perséphone* displacing the monolithic inevitability, the uncompromising sternness of *Oedipus Rex*. In the opera-oratorio human beings rise to godlike stature, the demigods of *Perséphone* affect us by their humane responses: the consistently lyrical features of the work represent the romantic phase of Stravinsky's neo-classic idiom.

There is no change in the essential principles of technique: one could rather speak of his having enlarged their validity to admit elements he deliberately avoided in the preceding work. This is obvious in the formal construction: here, too, the music consists of autonomous sections, "closed numbers", yet they are not completely detached from one another as they are in *Oedipus Rex*. The importance of the chorus is evident in both works; Stravinsky uses mixed voices here, but in fact female voices predominate. The bass is rarely resorted to, the tenor more frequently, principally to add brilliance to the sonority of the female *ensemble* whose conspicuous prominence is to a great extent responsible for the prevailing lightness of the score.

Of course the orchestral treatment has the greatest share in this. The combination here differs but slightly from that of *Oedipus Rex*. There the substitution of *cor anglais* and double bassoon for third oboe and third bassoon produces a dark shade. Apart from the frequency of soloistic passages, the most conspicuous feature of the score is the wide spacing in the part-writing for the instruments themselves: the great distance which may separate otherwise conjunct steps of a melody produces a remarkable airiness and transparency of texture. Relevant passages abound; the example quoted shows an instance of harmonic figuration:



There are some features in the melodic construction which demand attention. Most important among them is the prominence of conjunct progression—which is, of course, not contradicted by the particular method of scoring mentioned earlier—as the following examples will show;

**Ex. 7** *Ibid.*  
[110] Par-le - nous, par-le - nous, par-le - nous Per-sé - pho-ne  
(Sopr.)

**Ibid.**  
[224] (Vln.)

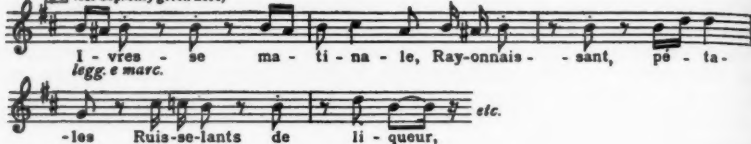
**Perséphone**  
[13] Reste a - vec nous, reste a - vec nous, Prin-ces-se Per-sé-pho - ne,  
(Fem. ch.)



The sweetness and grace imparted by the frequently occurring inflexions, and gentle undulations of contour should be noted; also the subtle recourse to chromatic changing notes as ornamental devices, adding a touch of piquancy;

**Ex. 8** Ibid

[23] (1st Sop. only given here)



Rhythm has always been the strongest weapon in Stravinsky's armoury: in this score we note his particular care in integrating his rhythmic patterns into the horizontal and vertical texture. The barbaric force of his earlier rhythmic idiom depended on the autonomy of its application, on its impulsive straightforwardness; in the works of this stylistic period, especially here, its organization has become more purposeful: the resources are the same, but his methods are infinitely more subtle. The technique of displaced accents and metric contractions is evident in all of his works, but the caressing lilt of Ex. 8 is exceptional. Irregular disposition of beats is another favourite Stravinskian device: here the peculiarities of the French prosody and pronunciation are excellently suited to the variable stresses of his metric schemes. A curious ambiguity is often obtained by the discrepancy of culminative stresses and metric accents as shown in Ex. 7 (a), where the successive melodic climaxes (e and d) are on the stressed and unstressed beats of their respective bars.

The distinguishing qualities of *Perséphone* should not, however, blind us to a serious flaw in its construction. One would have reasonably expected the protagonist to be distinguished by the most convincing and prominent musical part; as it is, the *récitante* and *dansante* character of the demigoddess is far from satisfying. One realizes, of course, that the conditions of its commission were decisive in this respect; but surely the revision of the score in 1949 furnished an excellent opportunity for improving upon this deficiency?

J. S. W.

Ellis B. Kohs. String Quartet. Score \$2.50, parts \$5.00.

Robert Starer. String Quartet. Score \$2.50.

(Both Mercury Music Corporation, New York, 1951.)

Our vital musical renaissance tends to make us, naturally if regrettably, chauvinistic. We shall soon have arrived at the stage when we shall be just as surprised at hearing that someone in oh! so uncultural America has actually tried his hand at serious musical composition as the Viennese were when the news first got through to them that there was someone in England who could read music. Only, by that time the Viennese had a bit more to show for their insularity than we have for ours even now. One may therefore welcome the timely arrival of these two American essays in serious musical thought *par excellence* by two very different and markedly individual composers who are, if I am not mistaken, entirely unknown in this country. In both works, the quality of inventiveness, construction and expressiveness is such as would easily provide their creators with a prize, fifteen seats and three chairmanships on various Committees for Contemporary Music, a series in the Third Programme, profound notices in the musical press, an article each in the musicological press, on "Ellis B. Kohs and the British Tradition" and "Robert Starer and the British Tradition" respectively, and moreover no money—if they, the creators, happened to be British. But since they are American, it behoves us to adopt a more critical attitude which, as it happens, is easier in the case of the Kohs (written 1940) than in that of the Starer (written 1947), not because the latter is the better work, but because the former asks for it.



It does so by way of a quartet movement, the third, for two violins. The other two players sit by and partake, in view of what they hear, of chewing gum. The movement in question is the scherzo, and Mr. Kohs' strongest claims to historical precedence (in the improbable case that he is interested) lie indeed in the scherzo's forerunner, *i.e.* inside the minuet: in the trio. Trio, however, means something for three parts or instruments. But then, in places, Mr. Kohs writes four parts ("voices" to him) for two instruments. Some parts. At one point, the first violin climbs about in consecutive fourths, as in the intonation exercise of an obsessional neurotic, in another ("very broad"), the first violin's *tenuto* octave (!) a'-a" clashes repeatedly against the second violin's octave (!) g'-g". Does Mr. Kohs play the violin?

Haydn did. In his string quartets we find more or less complete sections for each possible solo-pair of colours. The texture is always cautious and immaculate, and the structural function unambiguous; in fact these sections are always a beginning or "up-beat" to the full quartet texture, in addition to being sometimes contrasted with the full texture of what goes before. The cello as duetting instrument is chiefly used at the beginning of slow movements: that of op. 33, no. 2, opens with the viola (theme) and cello, that of op. 50, no. 3, with the cello (theme) and viola, and that of op. 77, no. 2, with the first violin (theme) and cello. The only occasion when the cello is duetting outside a slow movement is the first part of op. 3, no. 3's minuet, where the first violin drags an open-string dominant pedal along its theme. The minuet of op. 55, no. 2, opens with a duet between first violin and viola where the theme is first played by the viola and then taken over by the first violin, thereby creating the illusion of an intensification of texture which later, when the other instruments enter, becomes reality. The other Haydn "duets" use Mr. Kohs' combination, but only one of them employs double stoppings. Op. 33, no. 3 has a trio for the two violins whose extremely light, airy, "twittering" texture has earned the work the Austrian title "Vogel-Quartett". Op. 76, no. 3, the "Kaiser-Quartett", shares out the first variation on the anthem between second violin (theme) and first violin. In the 6th Quartet of the same *opus*, the first movement's first (unofficial, *i.e.* not-so-called) variation is likewise a duet between second violin (theme) and first violin. It is the beautiful 2-violin trio of op. 9, no. 4, which is actually in three parts, with the first violin in double stoppings throughout, but Haydn takes the greatest care to make it sound sonorous, by means of the "lie" of both instrumental parts, the playability of the double stoppings, and the availability of overtones created by the chords and the key (D major).

After Haydn and before Mr. Kohs' arrival, no one has been as adventurous as either. Times have changed, but the law that every paradoxical texture must have a clear-cut formal meaning hasn't. Sound-ideals (if any left) have changed too, and Mr. Kohs may be helping to change them further or eliminate them altogether, but while spirit can no doubt overpower matter, there must be plenty of spirit for the purpose.

#### GERMAN SCHOLARSHIP

F. Gennrich (ed.). *Troubadours, Trouvères, Minne- und Meistergesang*. (Arno Volk-Verlag, Köln.) 1951.

This excellent collection, with a clear historical introduction and a detailed bibliographical section, constitutes the second *Lieferung* (instalment) of a large-scale historical anthology which sails under the title *Das Musikwerk*, and whose general editor is K. G. Fellerer of Köln. The series will comprise about 30 volumes, including *Die Musik der Ostliturgien* (J. Handschin, Basel), *Der gregorianische Choral* (F. Tack, Köln), *Die frühe Mehrstimmigkeit* (H. Husmann, Hamburg), *Die Kunst der Niederländer* (A. Smijers, Utrecht), *Die altklassische Polyphonie* and *Die Monodie* (both volumes edited by the general editor), *Die Musik des Generalbasszeitalters* (H. Husmann, Hamburg), *Die Musik der Klassik und Romantik* (K. Stephenson, Bonn), *Die Musik des mittelalterlichen Dramas* (K. Dreimüller, München), *Europäischer Volkslied* (W. Wiora, Freiburg), *Der Tanz* (W. Gerstenberg, Berlin), *Die Fuge* (A. Adrio, Berlin), *Das mehrstimmige Lied des 16.*

*Jahrhunderts in Italien, Frankreich und England* (H. Engel, Marburg), *Das deutsche Chorlied* (H. Osthoff, Frankfurt, the home-town of the present volume's editor too), *Die Motette* (H. Zenck, Freiburg), *Die Messe* (Dr. Schmidt-Görg, Bonn), *Die Improvisation* (E. T. Ferand, New York), *Die Suite* (M. Reimann, Berlin), *Die Solosonate* (F. Blume [initial supplied by us], Kiel), *Die Triosonate* (E. Schenck, Vienna), *Das Instrumentalkonzert* (H. Engel, Marburg), *Die Instrumentation* (E. Wachten, Berlin), *Das Charakterstück* (W. Kahl, Köln; taking into account, one faintly<sup>1</sup> hopes, the first act of *Wozzeck*), *400 Jahre Europäischer Klaviermusik* (W. Georgii, München), and *Die Oper* (A. A. Abert, Kiel).

By now the surviving reader will have gathered that the whole undertaking, very whole, is approached in the German way, as is indeed the present, comprehensive selection of known, little- and hardly-known mediaeval secular monody from the troubadour songs of the twelfth century to Hans Sachs' *Silberweise* and *Klingende Ton* (1513 and 1532); the editing is thorough, consistent and perhaps over-severe. The rhythmic interpretation is strictly modal and will no doubt arouse heated discussion in the case of the Minnesinger melodies. Incidentally, since the editor's preface is not unaware of the social aspect of his theme, it might have mentioned, for more than curiosity's sake, that we know about a Jewish Minnesinger, Süßkind von Trimberg (born around 1220 in Trimberg near Schweinfurt in Bavaria), who seems to have been well-known in Germany and a portrait of whom can be found in the library of Heidelberg University. Nothing is known about his melodies, but six of his texts are extant, and according to an authority in this field<sup>2</sup> they lean on the whole upon Jewish literature.

#### FILM MUSIC: FROM AN OLD AND A NEW CULTURE

Richard Strauss. *München (Ein Gedächtniswaltzer)*. Full score. 1951. 30s.

Aaron Copland. *The Red Pony: Film Suite for Orchestra*. Full score. 40s.

(Both Boosey & Hawkes.)

Film music of two fairly opposite countries' leading composers revised and arranged for the ear alone: an interesting comparison with an interesting conclusion, for the G major score of the old world's acknowledged "great composer" is by far the weaker one, bearing hardly any comparison, certainly not Willi Schuh's,<sup>3</sup> with either the *Metamorphosen* or the *Rosenkavalier* waltzes. Strauss originally wrote the piece for a film about Munich (1939) which, for the censor's reasons, was never released, and in 1945—the Munich opera house having meanwhile been bombed and destroyed—he killed two birds with one development section, i.e. by including an "In memoriam" middle part in the minor mode which both gave expression to his present state of mind and helped to extend the waltz to the symphonic outlines desirable in the concert hall, so that it can now be said to be "in fully developed sonata-form", a phrase that has come into use since fully developed sonata-form has gone out of it. The late Strauss' passion for quotations, official and unofficial and with particular attention to his own earlier works, is once again apparent: *Feuersnot* is quoted twice, apparently for programmatic reasons, but the trouble is that the second subject, for which the composer goes to the (later) tonic minor's relative major, is not just an official quotation from a *Feuersnot* waltz, but also reverts, *via* the latter and somewhat too markedly, to the Haydn cello Concerto. The recapitulation and coda are uncondensed and fall smoothly into the entirely expected traditional scheme: *in memoriam*, *Gedächtniswaltzer* indeed. Altogether, the waltz is now twice as long as its filmic original. The orchestration is, needless to say, superb.

The Copland (1948), which again is more than twice as long as the Strauss' second version, is made of different stuff. Originally written for the film of the same title, it has likewise been recast in quasi-symphonic fashion, but no new material has been added.

<sup>1</sup> The English dislike *Wozzeck* because it's German and the Germans dislike it because it isn't.

<sup>2</sup> Rothmüller, A. M., *Die Musik der Juden*, Zürich, 1951, p. 97.

<sup>3</sup> *Tempo*, Autumn, 1951, p. 36.

The Suite takes cyclic form, with a return of the opening's folkloristic tune at the end of the last movement which includes part of the original title music. The six movements, (1) *Morning on the Ranch*, (2) *The Gift*, (3) *Dream March and Circus Music*, (4) *Walk to the Bunkhouse*, (5) *Grandfather's Story* and (6) *Happy Ending*, could teach Strauss' unnatural sons in Hollywood their business. In August, 1951, I reminded Hollywood of what Copland<sup>4</sup> said in connection with Ernst Toch's film score for *Peter Ibbetson* (MR, pp. 222f.): "On the strength of this job, Toch should be to-day one of the best-known film composers. But unfortunately there aren't enough people in Hollywood who can tell a good score when they hear one. To-day Toch is generally assigned to do 'screw music' (in Hollywood music is either 'screw' or 'down to earth'—and most of it is down to earth). . . . Most [Hollywood] scores are written in the late-nineteenth-century symphonic style, a style now so generally accepted as to be considered inevitable". It is of course possible that the stressedly down-to-earth music of *The Red Pony* is screw in Hollywood's ears, and that this is why we don't get a fraction of the Copland film scores from Hollywood which we and, above all, Hollywood direly need. But when Hollywood goes abroad and presents itself before musicians of integrity, it suddenly remembers the composer whom it neglects at home. At the Florentine International Film Music Congress of 1950 (see MR, XI/3 and XII/3), Mr. Daniele Amfitheatrof, the sole American delegate (on two of whose own creative achievements I commented in the last issue), presented excerpts from *The Red Pony* amidst his otherwise sickening anthology of incredible *Kitsch*. In my original report (MR, XI/3), I had no space to mention the overpowering effect which this violent contrast between rubbish and art had upon the musicians in the audience; now that the reader is afforded an opportunity to acquaint himself with the *Red Pony* music he will have no difficulty in picturing the unusual situation at the Congress for himself. For the rest, I suggest that when Hollywood next shows off Aaron Copland's music (I gather that preparations for a Second International Film Music Congress have started in Italy), they might simultaneously inform us how much work they have given the composer in the meantime, and why not.

#### REIZENSTEIN EN FACE: A UNIQUE ACHIEVEMENT

Franz Reizenstein. Quintet in D for pianoforte and strings. (Lengnick.) 25s.

H. F. Redlich's interesting "Profile" of Reizenstein (MR, XII/3, pp. 247 ff.) must be complemented by an *en face* view which may not exhibit the character (or lack of character) as well as an outline seen from the side, but which gives a picture of the personality in its full proportions, for the simple reason that you can see the other side of the face. Redlich is of course wide-sighted enough to catch a glimpse of the other side even when happily profiling: "What is more, [Reizenstein's] music is superbly written for its various *media*". But then he goes on to make an (admittedly penetrating) fuss about Reizenstein's eclecticism: "Even worse [than that of the piano Sonata of 1948] is the case of the earlier violin Sonata in G sharp, of which the first bar begins all too undisguisedly with the germinal motif and principal false relation of Walton's viola Concerto". Apart from the fact that Redlich does not mention that the motif is worked into the piano's accompanimental figure, thus assuming a vastly different meaning; apart, too, from the consideration that, anyway, these sixths have become a tag comparable to the eighteenth-century *clichés* of which Haydn and Mozart availed themselves to great advantage, the fundamental question surely is this: does Reizenstein's eclecticism achieve something new? For instance, what struck me forcibly about this violin Sonata, and what Redlich does not seem to have noticed at all, was that its *Misterioso* gave the first well-sounding *con sordino* section in the entire literature for violin, or viola, and piano. A small point in itself, maybe, but indicative of Reizenstein's astounding ear. Now, owing to historically inevitable circumstances (more of harmony than of instrumentation), good ears are not the rule to-day even among good composers. Consequently, Reizenstein's

<sup>4</sup> *Our New Music*, New York, 1941.

textures have a very special function in the contemporary bustle; nor is Redlich right in ascribing them to his "thorough training in Hindemith's rigorous school". I am not minimizing the latter's greatness when I say that he hasn't half of his pupil's sensitivity to *Klang*; one has only to listen to Reizenstein playing the piano to realize that his imaginative and intrinsically musical experiencing of sound emerges directly from his own musical personality. Redlich is fortunately musical and intelligent enough to contradict himself: "From a purely pianistic point of view Reizenstein's music is superior in layout to Hindemith's often dry and harsh juxtapositions". There is no purely pianistic point of view, however, except in bad piano pieces; and "music superbly written for its various *media*" does not say enough: many a piece of Reizenstein is *newly* written for its *medium*. In and by his very eclecticism, he improves upon and repairs the sonorities of the musical thought he re-expresses; he even renovates the sound-*façades* of the German romantic masters.

A radical case in point is the new piano Quintet (1951), which almost re-creates a *medium* in that it shows that this particular combination is not quite so *a priori* unmusical as almost its entire history would lead us to believe. Boccherini, one of the discoverers of the string quartet, wrote twelve piano quintets; but the great classics, who virtually always thought in terms of specific sound, knew apparently why they didn't make the form their own. At the same time, Mozart established a precedent for the concertizing piano in a chamber-musical combination with his E $\flat$  piano Quartet which is texturally unsatisfactory and not on a level with the sublime G minor one, the greatest work of its species. Schubert stands almost outside history with his special piano quintet texture and its highly individual treatment (likewise with his inimitable and equally perfect approach to the almost as difficult *medium* of the piano trio); so that it was really Schumann, an unrecognized innovator and revolutionary in more respects than this one, who can be said to have resumed the *medium* for contemporary and future use (upon the piano's development into a concert room instrument); but while his inner movements are great, the texture of the outer ones misfires. His deed together with his and his coevals' inevitable misdeed—the (re-)orchestralization (precedent: *Grosse Fuge*) and publifying of the string quartet, including a pathetically apotheosizing finale which could never sound as it wanted to, and to which yet even the sound-master Mendelssohn had to subscribe—made the *genre* of the piano quintet a renewed feasibility; and to-day we look back, if we must, on the piano quintets of Brahms, Dvořák and also Novák, César Franck, Saint-Saëns, Pfitzner, Goldmark (whose B $\flat$  Quintet, Op. 30, is forgotten in Blom's *Everyman's Dictionary*), Reger, Dohnányi, Bloch, Shostakovich (1940: Stalin prize) and so forth, and realize that the smallest of all conventional chamber-musical literatures has become quite bulky; in fact, there is now even a permanent piano quintet *ensemble* in existence, *i.e.* the *Quintetto Chigiano* whom, as experts, I should greatly like to ask this question: Is there a single complete work on their repertory which really vindicates its *medium*? If not, I can warmly recommend them one.

It is against this historical background that Reizenstein's unique exercise in sonority should be seen, played and heard to be believed. Tending in the direction of what one might call the classical aspects of his German romantic forefathers, he has chosen an instrumental combination whose latest origin is typically German-romantic; and like another German romantic Jew of classicist tendencies, Mendelssohn, he stands almost alone among his contemporaries with his classical sensibility to chamber-musical sound. (Mendelssohn's best string quartets, against overwhelming historical odds, take their place among the leading specimens of the *genre*.) Of course, he lacks Mendelssohn's originality. In fact, rather significantly, he sounds best at his most eclectic: a point for Dr. Redlich. The third movement of the Quintet is a scherzo not only headed, but really composed as *vivace con leggerezza*, thus already in the title improving upon many a romantic's indications, characterizations and explanations which put into words what the composer had failed to put into the score—perhaps the most amusing example being the "*grandioso*" in the final would-be apotheosis of Dvořák's C major Quartet (Op. 61). The texture of Reizenstein's scherzo, on the other hand, proves to be

immaculate from every possible point of view, so that one is left with the impression that this movement may be the best, if not indeed the only piano-quintettish piece ever written. One cannot, of course, suppress a smile—cordial rather than scornful—at the innocence with which the scherzo displays its ancestral line, particularly the finale of Brahms' horn Trio and the latter movement's own cousin, the B minor scherzo of Brahms' B major (piano) Trio. But even Reizenstein's perfected sound apart, this kind of natural, undisguised eclecticism is strongly preferable to the "personal" idiomatism—the guilt-laden mannerism behind which many a most "modern" composer hides his stale derivations, and which our press invariably welcomes as "contemporary", as "reflection of our age", because it sounds so much worse than the original article; as, indeed, does our age. The only typically "contemporary" characteristic of the Quintet is its pronounced preoccupation with *fugato* devices; and this is the entire structure's only flaw.

Dr. Redlich concludes his *Profile* with his reminder that "everything will depend for Reizenstein on an early acquisition of . . . a personal language". It is not a personal language, but a fashionable jargon which one *acquires*; personal language develops from within, if and when the creator's individuality has grown strong enough to break through his acquired craftsmanship and even through his innate sense of sound. The approach of this very crisis can be seen in the Quintet's opening movement which, significantly enough, does not sound half as well as the scherzo: you have to sacrifice your technique, your sensibility even, to depth until you are sufficiently developed to let your depth create its own craftsmanship, its synthesis of your knowledge and its own. If, meanwhile, your defects are always meaningful, and your perfection never becomes meaningless, you are achieving all you can.

The fingerings of the violin and viola parts are, in latest Bloomsbury parlance, a yell. It is true that the development of both string literature and left-hand technique justifies increased attention to the question of fingering in printed parts, but the work of the present, anonymous fingerer is of a thoroughness that presupposes a serious degree of unmusicality as well as fairly complete general idiocy in the players; nor is every specimen of his advice above purely musical suspicion. The fingerings in the cello part are more economical, but the respective reasons for their presence and absence are something of a mystery. The piano fingerings are, I take it, Reizenstein's own.

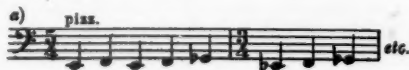
I have touched the case of modern fingerings because it is symptomatic of the atrophy of modern imagination: no doubt there is a market for every single fingering in the present violin and viola parts. Your reviewer, however, would urgently advise all those who constitute that market to cease playing their instruments at the earliest possible opportunity.

H. K.

#### ENGLISH STRING QUARTETS

Elizabeth Maconchy. String Quartet No. 4. (Lengnick.) 1950.

Miss Maconchy's new Quartet interests us as a clear offshoot of Bartók's middle string quartets. It shares its models' partiality for terse musical subjects based on minute intervallic steps, and also their preoccupation with ingenious rhythmical transformations. It lacks, however, Bartók's humanity and the mysterious background of folklore to fertilize the daring contrapuntal tissue with primordial musical lifeblood. The four movements of Miss Maconchy's Quartet are based on thematic variations of one basic idea, given out in bar 1 by the violoncello:



This changes into:

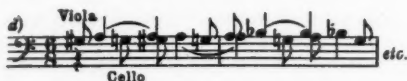




in the *allegro* mood of movement 2. It becomes an ubiquitous counterpoint in the viola in movement 3:



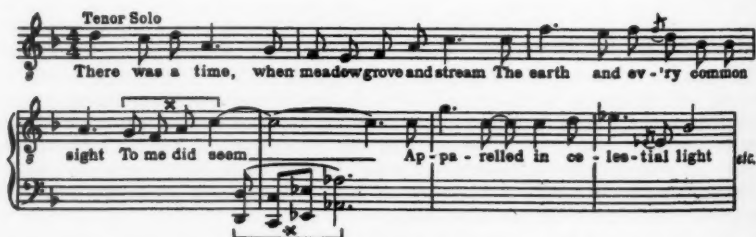
And it finally appears in the complementary dualism of viola and cello at the outset of movement 4:



The music set in motion by these thematic elements is uncompromisingly harsh and strident, rugged and combative in its pungent dissonances and often forbidding in its ever-changing metre. What a pity that Miss Maconchy has failed to learn from Bartók the subtle art of intermittent lyrical relief. Such relief is totally lacking in her competently written score. The whole atmosphere of the Quartet—with its occasional primitive root harmonies interlacing wide tracks of motoric pattern music “in modo ungarese” or “bulgarese”—harks decidedly back to the middle ‘twenties, when Hindemith’s and Křenek’s early string quartets set the heads a-wagging and young Atonality imagined it had come to stay. How far have we travelled since then, and how little does Miss Maconchy’s youngest *opus* reflect the experiences of that prolonged journey! There is a bad misprint in bar 2 of the second movement (cello), where the second note must, of course, be *f* natural.

Gerald Finzi. *Intimations of Immortality*. Ode for tenor solo, mixed chorus and orchestra. (Boosey & Hawkes.) Vocal score. 9s.

Wordsworth’s famous poem, inspired by “recollections of early childhood” and delighting in the intimate imagery of pastoral romanticism, seems a singularly bad choice as text for a Cantata. The simple rhyming scheme of its “poetical prose” seems unduly stretched by the rigours of a 6-8 part chorus, singing in elaborate madrigalian imitations. The scansion of the text is totally misleading in a principal subject such as the following, obviously emphasizing the unimportant word “seem” alone for the sake of a formalistic imitation in the orchestra (*cf.* motif x) and at the risk of obscuring the actual poetical meaning:



The whole composition is curiously old-fashioned in technique and musical subject matter. The initial horn melody, strongly reminiscent of Brahms, but even more the stereotyped treatment of emotional words like “joy”, “tears” and the like conjure up the atmosphere of Victorian Romanticism, probably released in the composer’s subconscious mind by the fact that his score was being written for the Three Choirs Festival in Gloucester (September, 1950). The formal organization of Finzi’s Ode is curiously reminiscent of a similar work by Hans Pfitzner, whose famous musical fingerprint—the archaic parallel fourths of his *Palestrina*—may be detected in many a passage of the younger work (*cf.*



vocal score, page 44, bars 10/12). I am referring to Pfitzner's Cantata *Von deutscher Seele* (1921), based on a loosely connected chain of poems by Eichendorff (in some respects Wordsworth's "opposite number" in Germany) which are interlinked—exactly like Finzi's piece—by symphonic interludes in the orchestra, fertilized by lyrical *Leitmotive*, culled from the vocal sections of the composition. It is, of course, quite possible that Finzi knows next to nothing of Pfitzner's retrospective tendencies and that he has arrived at a similar old-fashioned, slightly morose style of anachronistic romanticism quite on his own. Some of his principal melodies are beautiful in a faded, out-dated way, his pastoral scenes having the quaint flavour of engravings from the middle 19th-century, while the choral writing, especially in its more chordally treated sections, contains many truly poetic moments. I cannot help feeling that to write in 1950 a work so obsolescent is a singular quixotism for a composer still on the right side of fifty.

H. F. R.

Bernard Stevens. *Theme and Variations*, for string quartet, op. 11. (Lengnick.)

Even a minor English string quartet is, historically speaking, a major event: every creation in this extremely difficult medium means coming to terms with, or else validly rejecting, the Viennese tradition. Britten's C major Quartet does the former in the first movement, the latter in the last. Stevens wisely by-passes the sonata problem in his first Quartet. Far from being a minor work, the result is the best structure I have seen or heard from the composer. Vienna is not altogether neglected: the continuous movement falls into groups of variations which correspond to symphonic movements, with the fugue taking the place of the finale. Britten's *Spring Symphony*, completely different in every other respect, yet shows this basic similarity to the present Quartet: instead of Viennese symphonism with its sonata-forms, there are groups of shorter movements corresponding, in Britten's own words, to "the traditional four movement shape of a symphony", with the finale being represented by the only single and extended movement (significantly enough in free variations). There could hardly be two more different English creative characters than Stevens and Britten, yet in the sight of History they are equal.

Though it does not say so, the quartet is in E $\flat$ . The two extended phrases of the slow *tema* stretch diametrically over the circle of fifths: the first proceeds from E $\flat$  to the opposite key of A major, the second from A back to E $\flat$ . Two lyrical and two bizarre variations which split up the theme's phrases among the players lead to its resumption on a higher level of both expression and tonality: the "diameter" now runs from B to F. The relation of this 5th variation—a piece of rare beauty—to the *tema* is in fact intimate enough to warrant the feeling of a recapitulation and hence of a ternary "first movement"—a spiral-like cycle, though, rather than a circle. From the standpoint of the entire, continuous form, moreover, the question arises at this recapitulatory stage whether the structure of the work is not perhaps three-dimensional or triple-surfaced, i.e. whether beside explicit variations and implicit four movements we are not perhaps also listening to a *rondo* build-up. An affirmative answer presents itself at exactly the expected moment, i.e. after the same number of variations as have formed the middle part of the "first movement". That is to say, after the three variations that correspond to the scherzo and after the first *adagio* variation, the theme returns, in its original tempo, in a strict inversion,\* which includes the original harmonization; the (perhaps unconscious) rondo scheme cuts, as it must, across the "movements". The "diameter" of this 10th variation is D $\flat$ -E minor, but the tonality is now progressive, namely, towards the latter key's relative major's tonic (G) minor. This is also felt as the relative minor of the key which, at the end of the preceding variation, has led into the present one's initial D $\flat$ ; and it emerges now from the last bar's dominant seventh, instead of the expected G major, as transition to the last variation. As for the fugue, upon the, so far, only London performance of the Quartet I racked my brain how it came that in spite of its glaring newness the subject had no disuniting effect. Now, instead of trying to uncover hidden relations between subject and theme, I suggest we consider the consequences of our hidden "rondo form", wherein the fugue assumes the function of a deferred "central" episode whose postponement is made possible, indeed necessitated, by the thematic nature of the previous "episodes" (i.e. variations 1-4 and 6-9 respectively): when we arrive at the fugue, it isn't too late for new thematic material, but, on the contrary, late enough. The eventual climactic combination of subject and theme corresponds to the final return of the rondo theme. For this superimposition, however, the composer has to pay the price of the subject's somewhat primitive rhythmic structure, though its tonality is as simple as it is subtle: an unobtrusively Phrygian F.

H. K.

\* The d', 2 bars after figure 33, is, of course, a misprint for d $\flat$ ".

Bohuslav Martinů. *Sinfonia Concertante*. (Boosey & Hawkes.) 30s.  
 Zoltan Kodály. *Missa Brevis*. (Boosey & Hawkes.) 30s.

We in this country are behindhand with Martinů's work. He is a very abundant composer and it is almost impossible to get his work into perspective, knowing as we do so little of it. But of late, interest has increased on acquaintance with a certain number of outstanding works: though it is still the fortunate traveller who has the better chance to hear Martinů's music. Good reports have come from Venice where *Comedy on the Bridge*, his short opera originally written (in 1937) for radio, was recently given. The fourth and fifth Symphonies have lately been issued in admirable miniature full scores by Boosey & Hawkes (the fourth has a particularly ravishing Trio) and now there is this *folio* full score, clear and inviting to the eye, typographically a most presentable production, companioned by Kodály's *Missa Brevis* issued in the same series.

The Martinů work, in three movements taking in all about twenty minutes to perform, is scored for a *concertante* of oboe, bassoon, violin and cello with a small orchestra of strings, two clarinets, two horns plus (one almost says, inevitably: so frequently does Martinů use this instrument orchestra) a pianoforte. The writing is translucent and the work should sound exquisite from that point of view. The score, then, has an attractive appearance and escapes the disability some of Martinů's works suffer under, in that they look somewhat over-opulent, though under a skilful conductor they never need sound so. Here the first and last movements are gay and active; between them comes a slightly slower, but not appreciably more serious movement. The whole work seems pleasantly energetic in mood.

Kodály's *Missa Brevis* is a work of great spiritual stature. Those who heard it at the Gloucester Festival last year will recall its indefinable and yet most impressive quality of mingled emotional ecstasy and simple dignity. Does it, one asked oneself, come from a mind which though deeply learned is yet a young mind? We here know, by chance, more of Kodály than of Martinů and this is a work we should cultivate, for it is infinitely rewarding.  
 S. G.

Schubert. *Gruppe aus dem Tartarus* (2s.), *An den Mond* (1s. 6d.), *Am Fenster* (2s.), *Im Abendroth* (1s. 6d.), with English translations by Richard Capell. (Augener.)

Here are more of Richard Capell's Schubert translations. His magnificent study of the master's songs and their texts is the best possible witness to his qualifications. He holds the opinion that style must be matched with style; German Hölty, Seidl, Mayrhofer and Müller must be rendered in the English of say Adelaide Ann Proctor. One may wish that he had modelled himself on Blake or Keats or even Thomas Moore, all of whom wrote lyric verse. But no, if Müller's verse is sentimental, Capell's translation must be sentimental too. Which is a consistent and uncompromising view, all the more courageous in one whose criticism shows a sympathy with poetic as well as musical standards.

Hölty's *An den Mond*, a rather dreadful poem, is happily rendered—

"Dost mind thee, moon, of summers green and golden,  
 And this my beechen grove".

Nor is the English version hard to sing. The middle (*etwas geschwind*) section has some tongue-twisters, but they are as tricky in the original. At the reprise, it will not be easy to bring off "Nay moon no more", when the first word is set as two semiquavers; the German "*Dann*" fits the voice more happily. The interpreter will find too that, while "*Dann*" takes up the tale for the reprise, "Nay" does not mirror the musical change of mood.

In Seidl's *Am Fenster*, Schubert has set the last line of each verse twice, as he sometimes did (in *Winterreise*, e.g.). Perhaps it is this device that has suggested to Capell an idiom that somewhat recalls Housman, not unsuitably.

"Old home, old nest with vine-clad door,  
 The moonlight shows me plain  
 Your walls, your gabled roof once more,  
 And home am I again".

In performance, the last line will sound like "And Ho! Ma'am I again" unless the singer breaks the vocal line with a full close of the lips. Also, the penultimate syllable of the line is set as dotted semiquaver and demi-semiquaver, which is all right for the German "-mond" but too strong for the first syllable of "again". I wonder why the translation of the corresponding line in the second verse is changed at its second appearance?

"With none to understand,  
No soul to understand".

Capell's version of *Im Abendroth* is a close *pastiche* of an early nineteenth-century hymn:

"Fair, oh, fair, this world of light  
Father, by Thy bounty given".

Like those hymns, it is easy to titter when the words are read in cold blood, but they sing without strain. "Confronted, By the God-illuminated sky" is a taxing line for the listener.

The poet in Capell, which has already seen a nice conceit in setting the word "graceless" to a phrase involving grace-notes, rises to the challenge of Schiller's *Gruppe aus dem Tartarus*. I am sorry that he did not preserve Schiller's rhyme scheme (he has not rhymed first and third lines in the outer verses) but the version reads and sings well. One might question the propriety of setting "our" as a single syllable—especially when the line in question is sung four times. In the last line of the poem the phrase is broken in the middle which is a pity, for Schiller's last line and Schubert's setting move impressively through to the end; "[Ewigkeit] bricht die Sense des Saturns entzwei". There is a nice internal rhyme in the third line of the first verse.

Perhaps these comments of mine are pedantic. The whole problem of *Lieder* translation, and of singing in English, is a worrisome one. The traditional charge brought against English translations of Italian music, that diphthongs and explosive consonants break up a flowing vocal line, is hard to counter. As far as I can see, the only way to achieve a Verdian *bel canto* in English is to mumble the words and adopt Italian vowels—and that defeats the purpose of translation, which is to make the sense of the action clear to the audience. German vocal music depends far more in style upon a true enunciation of the words; in Wagner, and Wolf, and Schubert, the most satisfying interpreter is the one who colours the vocal line by appreciation of consonants, who sings *on* the words and thus blends word and tone; you have only to listen to records of Schorr and Flagstad, Schumann or Hüsch, to realize this. German and English are not so dissimilar in sound and colour that this cannot be managed in our language, even though our vowels are broader than theirs. Those singers who have allied themselves with Britten's music (particularly Joan Cross and Peter Pears) have shown that it is perfectly possible to maintain a continuous vocal line, of almost Italianate quality, which reposes on the colour of the text (it may be noticed, also, that Flora Nielsen and Bruce Boyce, who have specialized in the interpretation of the German Lied, have fallen on their feet into Britten's chamber operas). When singers begin to treat words, not as a necessary impediment to smooth singing, but as an aid to the interpretation of *Lieder*, then we shall be able to feel that English is not an un-vocal language.

Mozart. *Variations* for piano solo, edited by Adam Carse. Each set separately, prices from 2s. to 3s. (Augener.)

Dr. Carse's new edition of the piano *Variations* omits gratuitously inserted stage directions, and elucidates where need be (he spreads the first chord of *Je suis Lindor*, puts a sharp sign under a turn, and so on). Where Mozart forgot to signal dynamics, Dr. Carse leaves them for the performer or the teacher to fix.

The series is appearing gradually. When the task is completed, Messrs. Augener should publish the volume complete. Separate numbers are a nuisance in a library, and the new edition will be an asset. The old Peters editions were either poorly engraved, or cumbered with editorial marks, and not everyone can afford a *Gesamtausgabe*.

Herbert Murrill. *Dance on Portuguese Folk tunes* for two pianos, four hands. (Joseph Williams.) 4s.

This is the first of a new series of original two-piano works from this firm; a praiseworthy feature at a time when no *aria* or chorale-prelude by Bach is sacred.

Murrill's piece is quite effective and not very difficult. It begins *à la* Jamaican Rumba, with a pretty minor-mode tune that wanders up and down the five-finger exercise, calling on the flattened seventh before returning; harmonic spice is used with restraint. The middle section is like a *Furiant*, in the major. The piece will do very well in the second half of a programme, though the ending is too shy to end a concert with.

Samuel Barber. *First Symphony* (in one movement). Study score. (Chappell.) 10s. 6d.

Written in Rome during the winter of 1935-6, this Symphony was first performed in Vienna under Bruno Walter who later conducted the records (Columbia Special List). This near-miniature score ( $10\frac{1}{2} \times 7\frac{1}{2}$  ins.) has been available for some time by import from America. Now Messrs. Chappell are having their own copies made.

The Symphony, Barber's *opus* 9, has been played in the Midlands under George Weldon and reached London under his direction during the Festival. It is a moving, closely woven yet emotionally expansive work built on two themes. That, and any further comment, ought to be stale news by now, when we have had some years to become acquainted with it. Chappell have issued a score of Barber's second Symphony which is also recorded. Perhaps our conductors will learn and play both of them, frequently, for they are worth it.

Frederick Delius. *March Caprice. Summer Evening*. For orchestra, edited by Sir Thomas Beecham. (Joseph Williams' Miniature Scores.) 3s. each.

The strongbox of the Delius Trust has yielded these two unpublished works through the intermediacy of Sir Thomas Beecham who has access to that valuable receptacle. The pieces date from 1890 when Delius was living in Paris; Heseltine (and Hutchings after him) assigns *March Caprice* to the Leipzig period (1888) perhaps because the companion piece *Sleigh-ride* was written then; certainly, according to the publishers, the MS is dated 1890. *Summer Evening* is one of three small tone-poems which find no mention in Heseltine's list. Sir Thomas has fetched the pieces out of obscurity, played them and edited them for publication.

Those who reject second-best music will have no time for them. But second-best is often delightful. I enjoyed playing and reading them, and look forward to hearing them. *March Caprice* sits up and begs in C major, with a trio in A minor. It is spare in texture, simple in harmonization, indebted to Grieg. *Summer Evening* is more like the Delius we know best, though harmonically it is still undeveloped. Both pieces demand double wind (three flutes in *Summer Evening*), four horns, two trumpets, three trombones and tuba. The March augments timpani with bass drum, triangle and cymbals. Together they play for ten minutes, allowing fifteen seconds break.

Poulenc. *Sinfonietta pour orchestre*. Miniature score. (Chester.) 10s.

This work has received two performances to my knowledge in England, one on the radio, one in public by Chelsea Symphony Orchestra. It is scored for medium-sized orchestra (double wind, timpani and strings) and lasts twenty-four minutes. Its movements are *Allegro con fuoco*, *Molto vivace*, *Andante cantabile* and finale (*prestissimo et très gai*).

And when so much is said there is little to add. It is the mixture as before, altered, it is true, since the days of *Les Six*, and grown more melancholy, but with melodic outlines and harmonic devices that remain constant in all his work since 1939. The violin Sonata (despite formal weaknesses) and *La Figure Humaine* are the best of his late works, I

think, and this Sinfonietta is nowhere near them; it is long, windy, materially uninteresting and, however animated the pace, unexciting. It is, however, splendidly scored, with one memorable passage at the start of the *Andante* for two clarinets, two bassoons, three solo second violins and solo viola; it is nicely brought out.

W. S. M.

#### CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Christian Dupriez. *Tambourin pour servir de thrène à Maurice Ravel*. (Musica Nova, Bruxelles.) 1951.

Juan Orrego Salas. *Canciones Castellanas*, for voice and chamber orchestra. (Chester.) 1951. 15s.

M. Dupriez' piece will be welcomed especially by enterprising amateur orchestras of medium dimensions: the technical demands of the orchestral part writing are moderate. To many the shortness of this work would seem advantageous if only for practical reasons; on the other hand the elusive charm of this brief music would make us desire that its delight lasted longer.

The sub-title suggests a "funeral chant" for Ravel, in the manner of those Renaissance pieces in which the passing of a great musician was mourned by his disciples; in the form of a co-operative undertaking, it was customary to quote from the works of the deceased. M. Dupriez' quotation consists of what one would be inclined to call a technical procedure, rather than a "line" of music. The persistent and very soft B, which seems to be the only *raison d'être* in the score of the two horns, supported by the harp's gently repetitive scansion of the same note, is a citation from Ravel's "*Le gibet*" (the second piece in his *Gaspard de la Nuit*) differing only by a semitone.

M. Dupriez' sense of orchestral colour is second only to Ravel's, he evinces a preference for blended hues and avoids any peremptoriness in tonal volume: there is not a *forte* in the piece. The musical ideas themselves are free from any formal constraint, except the broad outlines of a ternary scheme, and might be described as a series of paragraphs around an implied but unpronounced central theme. The inspired delicacy and the evocative atmosphere of this work, displaying an impeccable taste, make us look forward to further works from its composer. Praise is due to the excellent quality of paper as well as to the serious attention to the printing which, we hope, will remain the distinguishing feature of the publications coming from Musica Nova.

Mr. Orrego Salas' Castilian songs are settings for soprano and chamber *ensemble* of poems by Lopez de Mendoza, marquis of Santillana (1), Juan del Enzina (2), and Gil Vicente (2). The instrumental combination, airy and transparent throughout, provides opportunities for occasional solo display of the participating instruments, and supports the voice admirably. The treatment of the songs varies: in some harmonic thinking dominates, enlivened by imitative touches (Nos. 2 and 5), these are quick in *tempo* and based on *siciliano* rhythms; others are contrapuntal, of which the fifth—the longest piece of the collection—presents a decorative accompaniment figure as a persistent background to a melismatic vocal part; the fourth shows imitative treatment; while the first supports the voice with slight comments, now harmonic, now contrapuntal. The formal organization of the second and fourth is interesting: the former shows the successive strophes of the song in an ascending sequence culminating in the last; the latter concludes with a lower transposition of the opening strain.

The Iberian character of the music is quite unmistakable; the fertilizing influence of folkmusic is everywhere felt, yet one would hesitate to ascribe its spontaneity to any direct folk tune quotation. The stimulus of Falla is also discernible to some extent, especially in the technical methods (*ostinato* passages, colouristic harmony) employed; but the music of any recent Spanish composer could not help but being indebted to the creator of contemporary Spanish musical idiom.

There are some misprints in the score; the passage printed in the *cor anglais* part, from the third bar on top of the page to figure 2, should belong to the clarinet—and one notes the improbability of the high A in the voice part on page 19, two bars before figure 4.



## MUSIC FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO

Alan Richardson. Sonata No. 1 for violin and piano. (Augener.) 1951. 10s.

William Walton. *Two Pieces* for violin and piano. (Oxford University Press.) 1951. 5s.

The title, Sonata for violin and piano, imposes an obligation: the instruments should co-operate as equal partners in, and contribute their own particular instrumental resources to the musical discourse. Unblendable as their respective sonorities are, they should be carefully balanced; their differing colours exploited in regard to their own registers as well as in their mutual relation; the expedencies of their tone-production (violin: sustained *cantabile*—piano: dynamic percussion) suitably matched or opposed; and these technical procedures purposefully organized into the general structural framework. The form, admittedly a hard nut to crack, has always been a stimulus and challenge to any serious composer, though few succeed in creating a perfect solution.

Mr. Richardson's technical competence is unquestionable: he is conscious of the problems presented by the medium, and his concern with the proper organization of instrumental resources is evident in each of the three movements. Let us refer to one instance typical of the entire work, *viz.* to the D flat passage preceding the re-introduction of the main *allegro* in the first movement: the shapely turns of the melody are entrusted to the violin whose middle and low registers confer additional warmth to the expressive fervour of the passage, while the piano's contribution is confined to a chord of D flat in its sonorous low register followed by a rising sequence of diaphanous touches of harmony notes.

The formal organization is clear throughout, although not too strictly adhering to traditional models. Here Mr. Richardson renounces the unifying power of tonal tension in favour of the more advanced device of motto theme. Consisting of three notes, most frequently occurring in the form of E-D-B, it dominates every aspect of the first and last movement. Since the figure is a typical pentatonic turn, the mode is apparent not only in the various disguises of the thematic subject matter derived almost entirely from the motto, but also in the progression and structure of the harmony: hence the refreshing spaciousness of these two movements. The contrasting mood of the middle movement is obtained by the prevailingly chromatic treatment of harmony and melody alike. A subtle variant of the motto theme provides the *tarentella* subject of the last movement, which alternates with a less precipitate, lyrical paragraph.

It will be observed that the technical processes involved here are unexceptionable; and if this alone would make a sonata, Mr. Richardson's would undoubtedly be accepted as a most distinguished addition to the literature.

The only drawback is the unconvincing subject matter. Not that Mr. Richardson's inventiveness is felt to be wanting: it is rather the genuine sincerity, the inspired spontaneity; the enthusiasm and inner urge of communication that we fail to discover, and that is so regrettable in view of the excellent musicianship displayed here.

Mr. Walton's *Two Pieces* are unpretentious and disarming: but the unostentatious exterior conceals a superior craftsman and a sensitive poet. The first (*Canzonetta*) is "based on a troubadour melody"; that is on a chanson of Thibault, king of Navarre:

"Amours me fait comencier  
Une chancon novele . . ."

preserved as the second piece in the MS. *Chansonnier Cangé*. Its flowerlike fragrantcy is only increased by the iridescent veil of suspended sevenths and ninths and the tenderly rocking figuration of the accompaniment: an excellent counterpart to its mood is provided in the exhilarating gaiety of the second piece (*Scherzetto*). Notable characteristics—alas not too often encountered elsewhere—simplicity of design and lucidity of texture.

J. S. W.



# Gramophone Records

## SUPRAPHON

|   |    |    |    |    |    |    |   |             |  |
|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|---|-------------|--|
| <i>E. F. Burian: Third string Quartet.</i>  |    |    |    |    |    |    |   |             |  |
| Czechoslovak Quartet  | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | G | 22787-8     |  |
| <i>Dvořák: The Golden Spinning Wheel, op. 106.</i>  |    |    |    |    |    |    |   |             |  |
| Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Talich   | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | H | 23753-5     |  |
| <i>The Midday Witch, op. 108.</i>   |    |    |    |    |    |    |   |             |  |
| Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Talich   | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | H | 23784-5     |  |
| <i>J. B. Foerster: Symphony No. 4 in C minor, op. 54.*</i>                                      |    |    |    |    |    |    |   |             |  |
| Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Kubelik  | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | H | 23079-84    |  |
| <i>Liszt: Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2.*</i>  |    |    |    |    |    |    |   |             |  |
| Gleb Axelrod  | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | H | 23852-3     |  |
| <i>Martinů: Fourth Symphony.</i>  |    |    |    |    |    |    |   |             |  |
| Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Kubelik  | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | G | 22951-4     |  |
| <i>Mozart: Sinfonia Concertante for oboe, clarinet, horn and bassoon</i><br><i>(K. Anh. 9).</i> |    |    |    |    |    |    |   |             |  |
| Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Talich   | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | H | 23100-3     |  |
| <i>Novák: Slovak Suite, op. 32.</i>   |    |    |    |    |    |    |   |             |  |
| Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Šejna  | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | H | 22997-23000 |  |
| <i>Suk: Fairy Tale, op. 16.*</i>  |    |    |    |    |    |    |   |             |  |
| Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Talich   | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | H | 23053-6     |  |
| <i>Trojan: The Emperor's Nightingale.</i>   |    |    |    |    |    |    |   |             |  |
| Film Symphony Orchestra, c. Pařík   | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | H | 23822-4     |  |
| <i>Verdi: La Traviata, Preludes.</i>  |    |    |    |    |    |    |   |             |  |
| Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Pedrotti   | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | H | 23801       |  |

English enquiries for these records should be made to Collet's Holdings, Ltd.,  
48 Woburn Place, London, W.C.1.

The above selection is representative of two sample consignments generously sent to this journal by the manufacturers in Prague. Finest of all is the Liszt *Hungarian Rhapsody*, superbly played by Axelrod and providing the best example to date of Supraphon's recording technique. As its serial numbers are also the latest of all the items listed, we may perhaps count this issue as a good omen for the future. An axiom of recording practice is the folly of trying to engrave a climax close to the spindle; this simple truth can be heard by every musician and understood by every engineer; yet it is disregarded more frequently than it is observed. In planning the layout of the Liszt, Supraphon have allotted the first two sides in exemplary fashion, but then have rather spoiled the effect by cramming too much music on to the third. Had they allowed the work to spread to four sides and thus avoided recording at too small a radius, your reviewer would have described this as the most faithful piano record yet released. For the rest, Foerster's formidable Brucknerian Symphony and Martinů's Fourth will fully repay concentrated attention. Talich's approach to the *Golden Spinning Wheel* is less flashy and in consequence more rewarding than Beecham's, but the recording is no more than passable. The latter criticism must also unfortunately be levelled at the *Midday Witch* and the Mozart *Sinfonia concertante*, both of which are beautifully played. In sum, all these records are worth investigation; in particular, owners of really wide-range quality equipment will be surprised at the recorded violin tone in the *Traviata* preludes; here is proof that it can be captured—away with the tin fiddles and wire bows of so much current English commercial recording!

G. N. S.

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J. B.

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Orpington, Kent.  
3rd June, 1952.

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It is possible to make too much of Decsey's "four volumes". They total about 200,000 words, of which a relatively much larger proportion is devoted to the music than is the case in my own book. Mine is only a single volume, but runs to 185,000 words, not counting footnotes and appendices. When I am able to add the missing chapter and other passages there will not be much to choose between us in point of length. Until that time comes there can be no question of "finality", as far as Wolf's life story is concerned.

Yours faithfully,

FRANK WALKER.

4 Norton Way N.,  
Letchworth, Herts.  
3rd June, 1952.

To the Editor of THE MUSIC REVIEW.

#### ALBAN BERG AND THE C MAJOR TRIAD

SIR,—In his article "The Eclecticism of *Wozzeck*—II" (MR, May issue, 1952), Hans Keller discusses *inter alia* the famous chord of C major (act II/1, bars 116 ff) which forms the background to *Wozzeck*'s words "Da ist wieder Geld, Marie, die Löhnung und was vom Hauptmann und vom Doktor . . ." ("See what I have brought, Marie, this money, some from the Captain and the Doctor . . ."). Quoting Dr. Gordon Jacob's explanation for this sudden intrusion of undiluted tonality (in *Music and Letters*, October issue, 1951), according to which "the major triad became for Schönberg and his school the symbol of triteness and drabness" and "in *Wozzeck*, for instance, the chord of C major is used by Berg to denote mean avariciousness", he calls this commentary "well-established nonsense", adding an explanation of his own, naturally greatly at variance with it. However, from Willi Reich's authoritative book on Alban Berg (Vienna, 1937) we gather, that Gordon Jacob's "well-established nonsense" is based on the composer's own comment. The passage in Reich's book (*op. cit.*, page 78) runs as follows:

" . . . Die darauffolgenden Worte Wozzecks 'Da ist wieder Geld Marie, die Löhnung . . .' werden zu einem gehaltenen C dur Dreiklang des Orchesters gesungen, in den in immer kleiner werdenden Intervallen die hastige Aufzählung hineintönt. Berg bemerkte einmal an dieser Stelle: 'Wie könnte man die Nüchternheit des Geldes, um das es sich da handelt, deutlicher zum Ausdruck bringen! . . .' (Berg once commented on this passage: 'How could the triteness of money, which is referred to here, be more clearly expressed!')

It seems most unlikely that Hans Keller has remained unacquainted with the content of the only documentary book on Berg. It would therefore be of unusual interest to find out why, in this case, he so flatly ignores the composer's own explanation, as transmitted through his first biographer and life-long friend and pupil.

Yours faithfully,

H. F. REDLICH.

Manor House,  
Gilesgate, Durham.

To the Editor of THE MUSIC REVIEW.

#### CARL STAMITZ

SIR,—I recently acquired seven parts of a symphony by Carl Stamitz in E minor in four movements, in which the bass part has the middle page missing. The second flute part is also missing. If any reader has another copy of this symphony, perhaps he would communicate with me. It is, I think, a sufficiently "rare" symphony to claim no place in accepted lists. It is not in the D.D.T. index. It is numbered IV, and like many others is described as an overture on the outside of the first-violin part, and as a *sinfonia* on the inside page of each part. The work shows a rather unfamiliar side of Carl Stamitz, or I should not have troubled you. It may be gathered that the bass is my main quarry.

Yours faithfully,

A. E. F. DICKINSON.

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Yours faithfully,

FRANK WALKER.

4 Norton Way N.,  
Letchworth, Herts.  
3rd June, 1952.

To the Editor of THE MUSIC REVIEW.

#### ALBAN BERG AND THE C MAJOR TRIAD

SIR,—In his article "The Eclecticism of *Wozzeck*—II" (MR, May issue, 1952), Hans Keller discusses *inter alia* the famous chord of C major (act II/1, bars 116 ff) which forms the background to *Wozzeck*'s words "Da ist wieder Geld, Marie, die Löhnung und was vom Hauptmann und vom Doktor . . ." ("See what I have brought, Marie, this money, some from the Captain and the Doctor . . ."). Quoting Dr. Gordon Jacob's explanation for this sudden intrusion of undiluted tonality (in *Music and Letters*, October issue, 1951), according to which "the major triad became for Schönberg and his school the symbol of triteness and drabness" and "in *Wozzeck*, for instance, the chord of C major is used by Berg to denote mean avariciousness", he calls this commentary "well-established nonsense", adding an explanation of his own, naturally greatly at variance with it. However, from Willi Reich's authoritative book on Alban Berg (Vienna, 1937) we gather, that Gordon Jacob's "well-established nonsense" is based on the composer's own comment. The passage in Reich's book (*op. cit.*, page 78) runs as follows:

"... Die darauffolgenden Worte Wozzecks 'Da ist wieder Geld Marie, die Löhnung . . .', werden zu einem gehaltenen C dur Dreiklang des Orchesters gesungen, in den in immer kleiner werdenden Intervallen die hastige Aufzählung hineintönt. Berg bemerkte einmal zu dieser Stelle: 'Wie könnte man die Nüchternheit des Geldes, um das es sich da handelt, deutlicher zum Ausdruck bringen! . . .' (Berg once commented on this passage: 'How could the triteness of money, which is referred to here, be more clearly expressed!')

It seems most unlikely that Hans Keller has remained unacquainted with the content of the only documentary book on Berg. It would therefore be of unusual interest to find out why, in this case, he so flatly ignores the composer's own explanation, as transmitted through his first biographer and life-long friend and pupil.

Yours faithfully,

H. F. REDLICH.

Manor House,  
Gilesgate, Durham.

To the Editor of THE MUSIC REVIEW.

#### CARL STAMITZ

SIR,—I recently acquired seven parts of a symphony by Carl Stamitz in E minor in four movements, in which the bass part has the middle page missing. The second flute part is also missing. If any reader has another copy of this symphony, perhaps he would communicate with me. It is, I think, a sufficiently "rare" symphony to claim no place in accepted lists. It is not in the D.D.T. index. It is numbered IV, and like many others is described as an overture on the outside of the first-violin part, and as a *sinfonia* on the inside page of each part. The work shows a rather unfamiliar side of Carl Stamitz, or I should not have troubled you. It may be gathered that the bass is my main quarry.

Yours faithfully,

A. E. F. DICKINSON.

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